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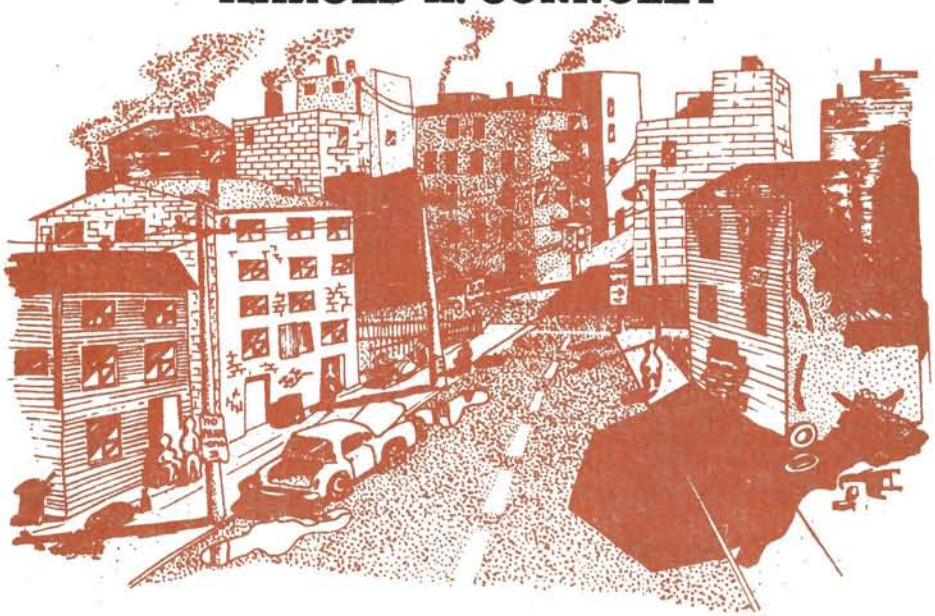
# commonweal

## AN URBAN MARSHALL PLAN?

**HAROLD X. CONNOLLY**



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**COLIN L. WESTERBECK, JR.** THE HEART OF THE MATTER
**HERBERT McCABE** IS THE INCARNATION A MYTH?

**RELIGIOUS BOOK WEEK:** CRITICS' C
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# NEWS & VIEWS

## Robert Lax

It took *New York Times* book reviewer Richard Kostelanetz 850 labored words to tell us something we knew from Robert Lowell in a single phrase: that Thomas Merton was "a modest, not altogether satisfactory poet."

Kostelanetz took the measure of Merton the poet while handling *The Collected Poems of Thomas Merton*, recently issued by New Directions for $37.50. His judgment was fair enough; I just happen to have found it wordy and redundant.

Still, Kostelanetz did strike one stimulating note in the Feb. 4 *Times Book Review*. Interestingly enough, it was not in connection with Merton, but in a parenthetical aside having to do with Merton's close friend Robert Lax.

Kostelanetz was remarking that Merton's best passages occurred in "curt prose paragraphs," like the *Original Bomb Child, Chant to be Used in Processions Around a Site With Furnaces* and *Cables to the Ace*. Noting that *Cables* was dedicated to Lax, Kostelanetz observed that he regarded Lax "among America's greatest experimental poets, a true minimalist who can weave awesome poems from remarkably few words. Though a survivor, Lax remains the last unacknowledged—and, alas, uncollected—major poet of his post-60s generation."

It was kind of a shock to realize that Lax was post-60, as indeed Merton would be had he not died so tragically ten years ago. The years have a way of getting away from us. Whatever, the post-60's reminder made it especially appropriate that some nice words, however brief, be said of Lax; better to be recognized when we can relish it. He must be pleased, over there on his Greek island.

Not that Lax has not known praise and recognition. The national literary magazine *Voyages* devoted a special double issue to him in 1968, and magazines like the *Columbia Forum* have published extracts from his journal. But mostly he's written and published in near anonymity. How many know his poetic evocation of a traveling European circus—with which, incidentally, he appeared as a clown—*The Circus of the Sun*?

Actually it's easy enough to understand that not too many should. Lax's poetry is atypical, iconoclastic, dependent on the imagery of the eye as much as that of the mind. He deals in inks of varying colors, in word arrangements, in jottings, a single sentence, a single line of verse. It's difficult, but Lax has his admirers.

Mark Van Doren, for one—although it is uncertain whether Van Doren was less captivated by Lax's poetry than what he called his "chief secret": "a sort of bliss that he could do nothing about." The bliss belies the appearance. Lax's face is that of one seeming to be caught in some inexplicable woe.

Van Doren put Lax in one of his own poems, a poem that took its cue from Merton's portrait of Lax in *The Seven Storey Mountain*. Of course Van Doren's poem is titled *Woe, Woe*:

*Woe, woe. The long face,/ Patiently, in hoarse wind,/ Meditates, meditates,/ Without a word that men hear.*

*When they do, and I have,/ What a seeing, what a song,/ Not a thought but thanks God/For bird and leaf and Sunday morning. . . .*

*Good, good: how get it said/In man's time? God is long./ Maybe that: he really mourns./ The night comes. So much unmentioned.*

Of Lax, Merton wrote that "he was a kind of combination of Hamlet and Elias. A potential prophet, but without rage. A king, but a Jew too. A mind full of tremendous but subtle intuitions, and every day he found less and less to say about them, and resigned himself to being inarticulate. . . . The secret of his constant solidarity I think has always been a kind of natural, instinctive spirituality, a kind of unborn direction to the living God. Lax has always been afraid he was in a blind alley, and half aware that, after all, it might not be a blind alley, but God, infinity."

It follows from this, and the pulses that throbbed in Merton and his crowd, that Lax should have become a Catholic. And when Ed Rice started *Jubilee* magazine, it was natural that Lax should have come aboard. They were a triumvirate, Lax, Rice and Merton. When Merton came into Catholicism, Rice was his godfather.

Lax's arrival at *Jubilee* followed stints at *The New Yorker*, *Time* and in Hollywood as a script writer. In the early 1960s he took off for Greece, and since then he has been here and there, sometimes even in New York, but never for long. Mostly he's been on an island called Kalymnos.

As the years have proceeded, Lax's poetry has grown more and more sparse. Denise Levertov once wrote that this saddened her, because she felt deeply that the mainstream of poetry was aural, sonic—not visual in the Lax sense. Kostelanetz would quibble with her on that, and so would that small group of devotees who receive Lax's poems in an aerogram or envelope of irregular size, marked with a colorful foreign stamp.

But if Denise Levertov is dismayed by the visual poems, she is not by Lax's "concrete" poems. In fact, she rejoices in them. "I am thinking particularly of *Sea/ Sun/ Stone*," she explains, "in which the repeated words, when the poem is read aloud properly, bring about in the imagination a more profound sense of their meanings till by the end of the poem we are hot with the sun on stone and our eyes are filled with the susurrations of the sea and our eyes with its dazzle."

Denise Levertov wrote that a decade ago. The next year BBC-Radio did a special broadcast on Bob Lax and his poetry. But since there has not been a whole lot heard about Lax. Too bad, really. He and his work are too valuable to be known but to a Mediterranean sun and to that handful of lucky people who receive those aerograms and irregular-sized envelopes with his songs and messages inside.

JOHN DEEDY

ROBERT LAX

now she is qui et a gain

the sea

(af ter an af ter noon

of rag ing)

no an ger left in her

& no de sire

to say a gain

the things she said

at the height

of the storm



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# CORRESPONDENCE

### Salt-Sea Talks

New York, N.Y.

*To the Editors:* You have done an important public service in publishing the excellent article by Professor John Logue on "The Salt Talks and the Salt Water Talks" [Feb. 3]. Having followed the issues involved in the Law of the Sea conference since Ambassador Pardo first showed me his proposal before his famous speech in 1967, I can testify that Professor Logue is not overestimating the importance of those issues. If more publications would undertake to break the conspiracy of silence that has befogged the Law of the Sea conference perhaps a "*real* common heritage treaty" could emerge. But it is very late indeed.

ARTHUR GOLDSCHMIDT

### Close Calls

Wausau, Wisc.

*To the Editors:* Your Jan. 6 editorial, "Too Close Encounters" overlooked the significance of the emotional appeal *Star Wars* and *Close Encounters* had for some viewers. In an era in which good and evil are both hidden behind public relations platitudes and emotional appeals to self-righteous rationalizing, we long for a less complicated world in which good and evil are as easily identifiable as the good guys in white and the bad guys in black in *Star Wars*. We want to blame evil on an outside force. We want to be rescued, taken into a world of beauty with a minimum of self-sacrifice by a mysterious force we intuitively respond to as good, enabling us to triumph over the experts and authorities who tell us what we should do, while relieving us of all responsibility for good and evil without the intellectual effort required to distinguish good from evil.

But when God gave man the capacity to love and the freedom to choose to love or not to love, man

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## EXTENDING AID TO EDUCATION

The Carter administration's Middle Income College Assistance Act is a glossy package that increases overall educational spending by 18 percent—a good investment by any yardstick—and earmarks $1.46 billion in grants and loans to students who were previously ineligible because of family income and assets. There is no question but that the Carter program moves in the right direction. College costs have jumped 71 percent between 1967 and 1975, reaching $2,000 a year for students attending public institutions and $4,000 and up for those in private colleges and universities, exclusive of room and board. More and more middle-class families have found it difficult to cope with costs such as these. At the same time, they have found themselves shut out of federal aid programs by incomes that for many have slipped back against inflation and by assets, such as a private home, which are generally not fluid. A recent study of the American Council on Education thus showed only 12 percent of the $7 billion in federal grants and loans going to students from families with incomes of more than $15,000, hardly an affluent income level any more.

The Carter plan is to work within current aid principles, and to open up scholarship eligibilities to students from families earning up to $25,000 a year and subsidized loans to those from up to $40,000-a-year families. Other features include grant provisions—a minimum of $250—to students not now eligible for a government scholarship. As many as 3.1 million students stand to be benefited, and needy students would not be penalized or deprived. The familiar need-oriented aid programs will continue to be funded.

There are difficulties, however, in the proposed program. The grant



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provisions appear slim—$250, for instance, is not a substantive amount when laid against tuition, room and board costs that mount into the several thousands of dollars; at some colleges grant amounts would hardly cover extracurricular fees. Also, if family assets are to be calculated into qualification provisions, any number of deserving middle-class families could find themselves placed beyond the advantages of the new program by real-estate appreciation in today's economy. A once-modest home is suddenly a $35,000 asset.

But so far as we are concerned, this is only the beginning of difficulties with the middle-income educational assistance act. We find it inadequate because it deals with only one problem level of education in this country, leaving out entirely the question of financial relief for families with children in private and religious elementary and secondary schools. They have been seriously neglected by educational aid programs over long years, and President Carter was aware enough of their plight during his campaign to promise to find constitutionally acceptable methods to aid families who chose this alternative to public schools. Not only has he done very little searching in this direction, but also his Middle Income College Assistance Act is widely believed to be calculated to head off programs that will advantage those families.

Specifically, the administration appears to be taking aim at the Tuition Tax Credit Act of 1977, introduced by Senators Robert Packwood and Daniel Moynihan, which would offer tax credits of up to $500 across the educational board. Families with children in college would be eligible; so would those sending children to private and religious elementary and secondary schools. The tax credits would be calculated on the basis of 50 percent of tuition expenses up to $1,000, with negative-balance features written into the measure so that families that paid more in tuition than they did in taxes could have their taxes canceled and conceivably could receive a compensating government check as well.

The Carter administration seems opposed to tax credits principally on the grounds of losses in tax revenues. The Packwood-Moynihan bill could cost the government $4 billion, according to unofficial estimates. This is no trifling sum, but nothing a government cannot afford which is concerned about equity for all its citizens and which is interested in the survival of alternative educational systems—for the leaven these can be in society, if not for the cost burdens they relieve in school district after school district.

Fifty senators have signed on as co-sponsors of the Packwood-Moynihan bill, a number which would seem to guarantee the viability of the proposal in the upper house. There is also strong sentiment reported in the lower house in favor of the Packwood-Moynihan concept. Admittedly all will not be clear sailing for their bill. President Carter has said that he will not accept a tax-credit measure, thus foreboding veto. At the same time there is the matter of constitutionality. Just last month a federal judge in Newark struck down a New Jersey state income tax law that provided a $1,000 tax deduction for each child in a non-public school. The constitutionality question is a very real one, but we line up with that substantial body of constitutional lawyers who believe that ways can be found to aid private and religious school-families. Advocates of the Packwood-Moynihan bill believe that this is a way, since the bill is designed to aid all taxpayers and not a particular group. In the belief that they are right, we support the Packwood-Moynihan bill.

Incidentally, support of aid extending to private and religious education is not a novel position for *Commonweal*. Over the years we have opposed those who argued dogmatically that the First Amendment necessarily excluded any kind of public aid to private and religious schools. Similarly we have held that the common good and sound public policy made some types of public assistance feasible, legal and desirable. If we were never found in the ranks of those who crusaded for federal and state aid, one reason is that we have objected to the single-mindedness with which objectives were pursued. We would still stand apart if the tactics were to shoot cannons across bows.

Recently, a nationally syndicated writer in the Catholic press chastized the bishops for not rallying the troops on behalf of the Packwood-Moynihan tax-credit plan. We feel quite the opposite. The strength of the tax-credit idea is in its appeal to legislators, not bishops. The bishops have undercut too many legitimate aid hopes in the past. It is better that this time they stay on the sidelines, and that the aid question be thrashed out in the political arena, where the Packwood-Moynihan bill belongs.

## COMING

JAMES T. BAKER retraces the last days of Thomas Merton in Thailand:

"Knowing better but still drawn to it, I began my search for Merton, this time for the place where he died. I wasn't sure what I wanted to find, but I had to go looking. Working blindly, I was fortunate to stop first at the Church of the Holy Redeemer. A priest there had been called on December 10, 1968, to help whisk Merton's body out of Thailand before the Thai police could tie it up for weeks with red tape. The Case of the Monk's Body, it intrigued me. I could imagine Merton having a good laugh about it."



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FROM ROME

# DAYAN AT THE VATICAN

The recent visit of Moshe Dayan, Israel's Minister of Foreign Affairs, to the Vatican did not create any sensational headlines. The Pope did not, as Dayan may have wished, announce the establishment of diplomatic ties between the Vatican and Israel. Dayan did not, as the Pope might have hoped, change his stance on either of the issues that have long divided the two states: the Palestinian question or the status of Jerusalem and the Holy Places.

The two men, in fact, merely reiterated their well-known positions which in the past have created so much friction between the Catholic and Jewish states. In an obvious allusion to the Palestinian people, the Pope spoke of the need to "put an end to the sufferings of all the peoples of the Middle East, respecting the rights of all and establishing a foundation for a fruitful co-existence among them." Recalling the Vatican's proposal to solve the problem of Jerusalem—"that unique and sacred city that is the spiritual center for the three great monotheistic religions of the world"—the Catholic leader insisted once again on the creation of a "special status" for the city which is internationally guaranteed and which renders justice to the pluralistic character of the Holy City.

Dayan, on the other hand, spoke only of the need to assure free access to the "Holy Places" without mentioning the taboo subject of Jerusalem itself—"that eternal and indivisible capital of the Jewish state."

No dramatic about-face, therefore. Yet something had changed since the polemic visit of Golda Meir to the Vatican in 1973. The mutual suspicion and antagonism that have so often marked Vatican-Israel relations were gone and in their place was a spirit of cooperation and compromise.

The relationship between the state of Israel and the Holy See has never been a very happy one: the most thorny issue has been above all the problem of Jerusalem and the Holy Places. When the state of Israel was created in 1948, it was not recognized by the Vatican and in December of that year the Vatican supported a United Nations resolution which stipulated that Jerusalem and the surrounding area should constitute a "corpus separatum." Between May 1948 and November 1949, Pope Pius XII wrote three encyclicals calling for the internationalization of the Holy Places. The resolution was never carried out and the Holy Places—and Jerusalem—remained in the hands of the Israelis and the Jordanians.

When Pope Paul VI ascended the papal throne after the death of John XXIII in 1963, he immediately began to speak of a trip to the Holy Land, a trip which he undertook in 1964. The first Pope to visit Jerusalem, Paul has continually returned to the problem of control over the Holy Places and the city itself. After the 1967 six-day war when the Israelis militarily occupied the Arab part of the Holy City, he proposed that Jerusalem be declared an "open city." In 1971 he spoke of the need for a particular status for Jerusalem and the Vatican's official organ, *L'Osservatore Romano,* criticized the urbanistic plans which, violating the UN resolution, were tending to establish "with the logic of a *fait accompli*" the sovereignty of Israel over all of Jerusalem.

These appeals had always fallen on deaf ears. The all-time low ebb of Vatican-Israel relations came, however, during the visit of the then Prime Minister Golda Meir to the Vatican in 1973. Emerging from her colloquy with the Pope, which had obviously not been a smooth one, a perturbed Golda Meir told the Vatican journalists that the Pope had invited her to come to Rome, adding that the cross she saw in the Pope's study had reminded her of the Nazi swastika. Embarrassed Vatican officials quickly issued a communiqué denying that an invitation had been extended to the Israeli prime minister. No one is invited to the Vatican, the note corrected; the door is open to all.

Signs of a détente between the Vatican and Israel came, however, at the end of last year. Pope Paul in a letter to the Israeli President, which the Israelis interpreted as a *de facto* recognition of its existence, asked for the liberation of Archbishop Hilarion Capucci, the Melkite rite Catholic patriarchal vicar for Jerusalem, who was accused of aiding Palestinian guerrilla fighters and was serving a jail sentence. The archbishop arrived in Rome in November. Also in November the Pope, speaking from the window of his studio, called the trip of Egyptian President Anwar el-Sadat to Jerusalem "a sign of peace." An observer from the Holy See was sent to the Conference of Ismalia in December. On Christmas day the Pope underlined the "importance which will perhaps be determinant" of the conference between Sadat and Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin for the return of peace and justice to "their land which spiritually is also ours."

These manifestations of moral support by the Vatican for the on-going peace initiatives provided the background for Dayan's visit. No concessions on either side, but for the first time a recognition by the two



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parties that if there was to be a lasting peace it must be forged together. During his meeting with the Israeli leader, Pope Paul emphasized the need for "all the interested parties to participate in the negotiations" and reconfirmed the Vatican's willingness to contribute to "the construction of peace." The importance of these remarks did not escape the Israeli Foreign Minister: he thanked the Pope for his promise to aid "all the parties in cause."

Not a victory for Israel nor a victory for the Vatican, Dayan's visit to Rome was perhaps a small victory for the cause of peace. MARGO HAMMOND

*(Margo Hammond, a frequent contributor, is an American journalist based in Rome.)*

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**IN EL SALVADOR**

# THE CATHOLIC FIGHT FOR FREEDOM

General Carlos Romero, the President of El Salvador, has a problem which no other Latin American dictator confronts: a militant clergy determined to organize the peasants into an effective labor union. As a result, General Romero has started a campaign of vilification against the 225 priests and six bishops in El Salvador.

In a talk of over an hour which I had with President Romero on a trip to El Salvador in January, the President, who took over on July 1, 1977, after a fraudulent election earlier that year, repeatedly told me that there would be no problem whatsoever in El Salvador if the "priests would only stay with their religious duties."

The end of the first phase of a classic church-state confrontation is occurring in El Salvador. During the past year the government at least acquiesced in the murder of two priests and made little effective protest when a right-wing terrorist group threatened the Jesuits either with expulsion or extermination. This openly anti-clerical campaign boomeranged on El Salvador, making that tiny nation of 4.5 million people notorious in the international press.

The second phase in the campaign to liquidate the farmers' unions began with a systematic oppression of the work of catechists and of all groups that come together for religious exercises.

The government is also engaged in a studied attempt to divide the clergy and to portray social activist priests and bishops as a tiny minority. The scurrilous and omnipresent literature which attacks Archbishop Oscar Romero (no relation to the President) is absolutely incredible. Virtually every attempt to discredit the clergy is tied in with a contention that the clergy has been infiltrated by Communists.

On March 5, 1977, the Episcopal Conference of El Salvador stated that there "has been a campaign against the church not only through the press, but through other means, such as threats and intimidation of priests, laymen, institutions and publications of Christian orientation." That campaign continues and has the backing of President Romero at least as the by-product of his repression of the peasantry.

In the countryside in El Salvador one can literally feel the fear, anguish and desperation which fills the lives of the peasants. I heard at least 40 separate stories of murders, disappearances or jailings of husbands or sons against whom no charge was brought.

All of the terrorism on the part of the government has been legitimized by the enactment on November 25, 1977, of the "Ley de Orden"—authorizing the banning of strikes and demonstrations, the suspension of habeas corpus and the banning of any statement which could be construed to even question an act of the government or of the armed forces.

The government of El Salvador is approaching with great apprehension the first anniversary on March 12 of the martyrdom of Father Rutilio Grande, S.J. This priest was probably the most prominent clergyman in El Salvador. He was the president of the Priests' Senate and the headmaster of the Jesuit high school. He had also devoted himself to a rural parish where he was massacred by gunmen whom the government never sought to apprehend. I was astonished to witness the President himself holding up a picture of Father Grande while protesting in an emotional outburst that the people of his country should not portray him, the President, as the murderer of this priest. Even General Romero appreciates the ancient Christian adage that the blood of martyrs is the seed of Christians.

The U.S. Congress can, if it so desires, terminate some $4 million worth of economic assistance given to El Salvador through AID. This is a feeble protest which actually could hurt the people rather than the government of El Salvador. The Congress, however, was not given the opportunity of voting on the granting of a $90 million loan for the San Lorenzo Dam to El Salvador. That loan had been held up by the International Development Bank since May, 1977. In the fall of 1977, Deputy Secretary of State Warren Christopher decided to assist El Salvador in the construction of this hydroelectric project. El Salvador had already arranged for European financing of the dam, but the State Department instructed its representative at the Inter-American



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Development Bank to vote on November 3 in favor of a loan which symbolized to the people of El Salvador that the United States is not going to "play hardball" on the question of human rights.

One of my companions on the trip to El Salvador was Dr. Thomas Anderson, the author of the best book in English on that nation. Dr. Anderson concluded that, in addition to El Salvador's notoriously bad record for several decades on human rights, that nation is now engaged in a more ruthless oppression of human rights than ever before in its modern history. Another colleague, John J. McAward, Associate Director for International Programs of the Unitarian-Universalist Service Committee and an expert on Latin America, opined that El Salvador is the closest of all Latin American countries to having an open persecution of the church.

There are few good options for the Congress in dealing with a nation like El Salvador which continues to violate the political, social, religious and economic rights of its citizens. But there simply has to be a way by which the Congress and the people of America can assist three million El Salvadorans who are desperately poor and anxious to share in some way in the recently tripled coffee export profits of the oligarchy of El Salvador.

I preached on Epiphany to a crowded cathedral in San Salvador. The sermon, carried nationwide by radio, centered on human rights. I was amazed but gratified that there was an ovation at the end of my talk. The applause came from a group that understood that the Congress and the American people could, if they so desired, turn things around for the peasants of El Salvandor.

ROBERT F. DRINAN

*(Father Robert F. Drinan, S.J., represents the Fourth Massachusetts District in the House of Representatives.)*

## WASHINGTON REPORT

# CONSUMERS CONSUMED

About the first major action in the House of Representatives in the new session was the defeat of the effort to establish an Agency for Consumer Protection or even an Office of Consumer Representation, offered as a better than nothing substitute. The proposed Agency would have practiced direct intervention in commerce and industry on behalf of consumers; the proposed Office of Representation would merely have presented the case for the consumers' interests and point of view before appropriate already existing organs of government. Neither was found passable and the whole idea, much amended, was wrapped up just a few days after the groundhog correctly predicted a long, hard winter.

Esther Peterson, the great mother of consumerism within the government, said that the votes taken would not be the last word on the subject and she undoubtedly was right. There are those of us who would be tickled pink to see Esther Peterson become the first cabinet secretary of consumer affairs, but on the basis of that vote, that elevation does seem fairly futuristic. Still, the long-run odds are in her—and therefore, all our—favor. The transfiguration of consumerism in a single generation is astonishing to contemplate, which, no doubt, is why nobody much ever does contemplate it, but the curve of that radical change, a swing of just about 180 degrees in the meaning of the word in the course of about 25 years, is promise enough that some form of government representation for consumers at least comparable to the representation of the AgBiz in the Agriculture Department, the arms merchants in the Department of Defense, and business at large in Commerce, is inevitable and closer than those votes seem to show. Those votes and their turning back the dread threat of justice for the outraged victims is a good occasion to review the enormous change in the very idea of consumerism that has taken place roughly over the period of the cold war, a juxtaposition of time periods not necessarily merely coincidental.

There have always been consumers, of course, and classical economics provides that whatever is produced has to be consumed to provide the profit margin enabling still more production to take place and so on and so on in an industrial-age version of the eternal return of Asiatic religions. Around the time of World War II, however, and especially in the years immediately after that war, there was an intensification of the idea of consumerism in economic thought and practice in this country and a small group of economic-sociologists was quick to catch on to the change. These were headed by David Riesman and Reuel Denney, whose epoch-announcing book was *The Lonely Crowd*, a study, like all epoch-announcing works in that field, of the way we live now, as contrasted with the way we lived until the day before yesterday and the way we think we live.

*The Lonely Crowd* came out just about a quarter century ago and I'm surprised that no celebration of the anniversary has been announced. It was an enormously important book, full of new formulations of social phenomena, equipped with new names that entered the language immediately and have been there ever since, including the title itself, outer-directed, in-



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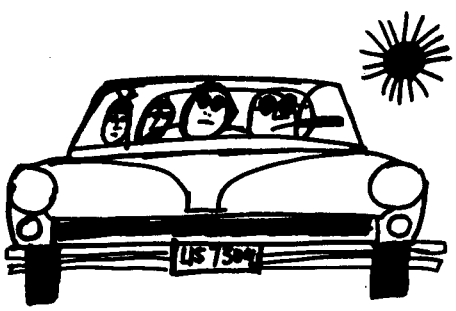
ner-directed and other-directed, peer-group and a raft of others. To read the book for review, as I did, that is, before a word about it had appeared anywhere, publication dates being much more respected in those days than in these, was to feel like stout Cortez or skinny Galileo, gazing into a vast new world previously undreamt of, yet instantly recognizable as logical, coherent and, most convincing of all, making structural sense out of a whole rag-bag of one's personal observations of people and institutions, including oneself. When the book actually appeared, we all became sociologists, practicing our new art upon ourselves.

At the heart of the lonely crowd, taking the place of the work ethic, heroic virtue, inner-directed achievement and other widely shared goals of the past, was the supreme virtue of competence in consumership. Through marginal differentiation among products not really very different, after all, the new consumer achieved the approbation of his peer-group and, not least important, fit himself into an essential niche in the society and economy. He consumed, as Henry Ford, for example, produced. Riesman and Denney did not presume to make the comparison, but their book actually charted the spread of certain of the distinctive



values Veblen had discerned in the Leisure Class among the bulk of the people largely disregarded by the inhabitants of Veblen's world. Despite the fact we still worked all our lives and all our days, we had been miraculously transmogrified into members of the Leisure Class ourselves.

That transmogrification, however, had taken place at the instance of the descendants, both direct and spiritual, of Veblen's world. If formerly they had carried on their own pecuniary emulation and vicarious consumption at Newport and along Fifth Avenue on the solid basis of the overt exploitation of the masses working from sun to sun for barely sustenance wages, now they could continue in even more exotic locales, even more extravagent modes of transport and social ritual, on the even more solid basis of covert exploitation of the masses by letting the masses into the front gate of the old leisure world and selling them tickets.

Through advertising since about 1920 and intensely following World War II, the most distinctive, or at least the most spectacular features of the socio-economy had changed from hard to soft, from enduring to ephemeral, from production to consumption. The consumers' society had come into being. The consumer's lot was to consume and in the process to educate himself for ever-increasing, ever-refining, consumership.

That element of increase and refinement was not perceived by Riesman and Denney as having much to do with the already existing, but miniscule, consumer movement. Increase and refinement expressed themselves through upgrading and uptrading, not at all through asking embarrassing questions about why the toaster doesn't work, the car is a death-trap, and the cereals and cosmetics are full of poison.

That's the change that has taken place. Nowadays to use the word consumer is to ask precisely those questions, to place oneself in an adversary position in relation to producers, to expect producers to be trying to rip-off what they can and to arm oneself against those efforts through cooperative action, through legislation and, eventually, through formal government representation.

Riesman and Denney, of course, were not advocating or blessing the now old-style consumerism they saw around them. They were really just magnificent reporters and brilliant analysts of what they reported. That process of refinement they reported undoubtedly has grown into the consumer rebellion of recent years, spliced onto the old, quiet, small-scale consumerism of *Consumer Reports*, buying clubs, union stores and similar essentially private manifestations.

What wrought the change? History, as much as individual champions like Esther Peterson or Ralph Nader. The Lonely Crowd's consumerism was tied to victory in World War II—the brave new world for the victorious American Boys and their faithfully waiting American Girls—and hence also to the economic escalation brought about by the early years of the cold war as a continuation of the economic shot-in-the-arm provided by World War II. Obviously, Vietnam brought an end to all that. From one point of view, if you can question a four-star general's optimistic view that the Tet Offensive was the end of the war for the Vietnamese, the beginning of victory for the Americans, you can sure as hell question General Motors's assumption that what's good for them is good for the American motorist.

From another point of view, the collapse in Vietnam, followed swiftly by Watergate and the end of cheap power, effectively ended the joyride of war and war-spending. Formerly all those bucks for bangs seemed to enhance the economy. Increasingly, we see that they really drain it. We can no longer afford to be the jolly free-spenders in the Lonely Crowd. We have to count our pennies and when we do, the old-style consumerism seems ridiculous to all except those who were cutting the game; the new style consumerism, part of everybody's survival kit.

FRANK GETLEIN



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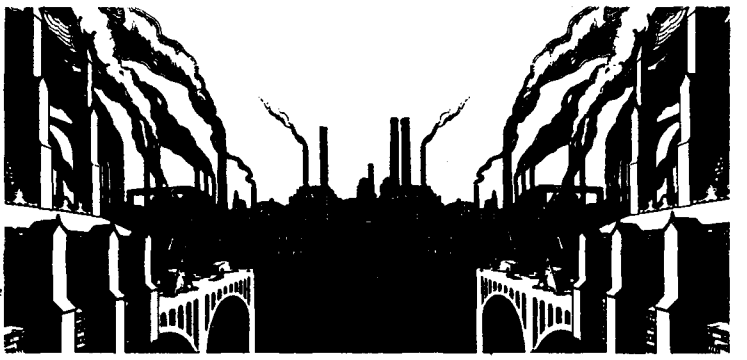
# AN URBAN MARSHALL PLAN?

HAROLD X. CONNOLLY



## Lessons from 1948

With what seems to be the regularity of the seasons, or of the appearance of some new strain of flu, certain public policy issues surface for periodic airing. One such recurrent topic is the plight of America's cities, and the consequent need/hope/desire to develop a comprehensive national urban policy that would bring relief, if not salvation, to these battered hulks of brick and glass and humanity. The draft recommendations of President Carter's Urban and Regional Policy Group, a Cabinet-level panel headed by Secretary of Housing and Urban Development Patricia Harris, have helped to refocus public attention on this problem. It has called for a "sustained, multiphased, multipurpose, coordinated Administration response" to the country's current urban problems.

The notion of a national urban policy conjures up, at least to this observer, images of despair—images of a yawning, disinterested public; of program abuses and dollars being siphoned off by professional poverty merchants; of much report and legislative writing and little appropriations; and most especially, of previous public policy failure.

The suggestion that Washington should enact what Felix Rohatyn, Vernon Jordan and others have felicitously christened a domestic "Marshall Plan" evokes a very different reaction. The words come trippingly, alluringly, to the tongue; visions of reborn, prosperous central cities dance in the head. Few images could indeed be as universally appealing. The original Marshall Plan, enacted in 1948, has long basked in the warm approbation of both liberals and conservatives. It conjures up a panoply of positive images and virtues —nobility of purpose, concern for the temporarily downtrodden, a helping hand extended, prosperity, and, perhaps most critically, *success*. No form of rhetorical salvation for the nation's cities is more appealing, even more useful for analytical purposes. Contrarily, one would scarcely suggest the equally valid, but generally discredited, terminology of a renewed "War on Poverty."

When urbanists suggest an urban Marshall Plan, it is essentially in terms, real though vague, of a commitment of will and resources by the national government to a particular problem. Yet analogies are slippery creatures. It might, therefore, be instructive to reexamine, with constant awareness of present urban applications, some elements of that earlier Marshall Plan.

When on June 5, 1947, Secretary of State George C. Marshall first publicly broached the concept of providing economic credits and loans to Europe, the idea was not greeted in Congress with overwhelming enthusiasm. The legislation wended its way slowly, even tortuously, through Congress and in early 1948, the issue still remained less than certain and the level of Congressional appropriation quite problematical. What ultimately made passage inevitable was a growing public concern about certain events. In Europe there was a widening breach between East and West about the proper treatment of defeated Germany; an impending Italian election wherein substantial Communist gains were anticipated; a Russian-engineered *coup d'état* in Prague in February, 1948, that cemented Czechoslovakia's absorption into the Russian sphere of influence. The common theme of these events, as publicly per-

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ceived, was Russian (Red, Communist) intransigence, even aggression, which had to be vigorously combated. In other words, it required a certain crisis mentality, real or fancied but broadly held, to create the necessary momentum to assure the act's passage with appropriate appropriations.

In the present context, it is difficult to suggest an urban crisis or dramatic turn of events of sufficient gravity to inspire an analogous response. New York City's fiscal difficulties, clearly the most drama-laden, publicized, and still continuing of recent urban problems, appear not to be of the magnitude or broad base to prompt the enactment of a new comprehensive national urban policy. Herbert Hill, former national labor director of the NAACP, recently warned that unless major changes occurred soon, "the ghettos will explode once again with terrible consequences for American society." Would renewed urban mass violence of the sixties genre be likely to hasten such legislation, or would it simply eventuate in increased surveillance and security, greater white and/or middle class flight, further erosion of the urban economic infrastructure, all to the further demise of the city? Awareness of the existence of a problem is not sufficient cause for legislative action; the plight of the cities must be perceived as *critical* to the national purpose and to survival.

Secondly, the prolonged prosperity of Western Europe's economy lends a certain credence to the notion that the Marshall Plan was not merely instrumental but crucial to its achievement, that it generated this economic miracle. Implicit in such a view is the expectation that an analogous domestic program would produce similar results. There is real danger in accepting uncritically such *post hoc ergo propter hoc* logic. Prior to the Marshall Plan, much of Western Europe, outside Germany, was already exhibiting signs of economic recovery. By the end of 1946, industrial production in the United Kingdom, France, Belgium and the Netherlands had attained or was approaching prewar levels. Moreover, the beginnings of agricultural recovery were evident in all countries in 1946. To be sure, this resurgence was foundering somewhat in 1947, but by the second quarter of 1948 (recall that the Marshall Plan was adopted only in April), industrial production levels surpassed those of 1938, a not insignificant accomplishment. While 1938 had been a recession year in the United States, it was a reasonably prosperous (in anticipation of war) period in Europe.

One American ambassador, in assessing the "phenomenal progress" of his assigned country, stated: "Even in the year of the most massive Marshall Plan aid (1949), it amounted to only three percent of the gross national output of the participating European countries." While acknowledging the economic and psychological impacts of the assistance, Paul Hoffman, American businessman and administrator of the program, reminded us that "97 percent of the tangible effort which produced that recovery was put in by the Europeans themselves."

All this is not to suggest that Marshall Plan aid was irrelevant to European recovery. An official British publication acknowledged this debt: "There is not a single industry or district in the country which has not benefited in some way from American aid." The dollar credits and loans from the United States enabled the European countries to purchase essential goods—foodstuffs and raw materials especially—but it is well to recall that these resources were grafted onto a Europe of substantial vitality and internal resources itself. Most of the sixteen participating countries had already attained an advanced state of industrialization before the war. Hence they were rich in such human resources as experienced management and skilled mechanical workers. Thus the European economy in 1948 perhaps needed the boost provided by the Marshall Plan to push it over a temporary hump, but in many ways it was essentially sound.

Can the same be said for the present economic state of America's major central cities? Large numbers of persons still labor therein, but for the past several years this work force has been diminishing or remaining stable at best, and in a dynamic, expanding economy, absolute stability is tantamount to relative regression. In recent years New York City has dramatically exemplified this process. Since June 1969, the number of jobs in the City has declined by over 650,000. One in six jobs present in New York in 1969 no longer exists. This represents an economic catastrophe. But the pattern is not unique to New York. Elsewhere about the Northeast and Midwest especially, and even beyond, central city economies have contracted, offering fewer employment opportunities to their residents and tax revenues to their government. Unlike the Europe of 1947-48, poised on the edge of recovery, the condition of many major American cities in 1978 verges on economic decline or even bankruptcy. It demands far more ingenuity, resources and persistence to turn around the latter situation than to move in concert with the likely trend of the time.

The Marshall Plan, was essentially limited in scope and appropriation, and temporary in time, a virtue not to be overlooked. It was scheduled for four years, with appropriations to be voted annually. It sought, in President Truman's words, "to bridge the temporary gap between European needs and war-diminished European resources." The Report submitted to Marshall in September, 1947, by the Committee of European Economic Cooperation which detailed Europe's needs, repeatedly referred to the "temporary" nature of its paralysis of production and the dislocation of its transportation system. Whether a similarly temporary program can remedy America's urban ills is, however, questionable.



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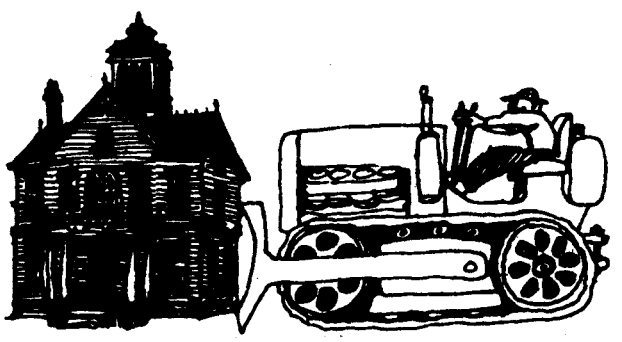
It seems probable that the rebuilding of these urban centers will require more patience, persistence and expenditures than such a limited approach connotes.

While the Marshall Plan was not extravagant in its appropriations, neither was it ungenerous. During the four years of its existence, non-military aid to participating countries averaged about 1.5 percent of United States' Gross National Product. A contemporary commitment of similar magnitude to America's cities would amount to some $25 to $30 billion per year. Presumably such an appropriation would be in addition to the substantial sums of federal dollars already expended in urban America. Such a substantial annual outlay might indeed go far towards alleviating urban ills. On a most elementary level, it could provide for some two to three million jobs at an annual remuneration of some $10,000, perhaps not munificent but certainly worthwhile. Are Americans willing to expend such amounts of tax dollars in order to help "save" their cities?

It is well to recall also the Marshall Plan's modest expectations. It did not promise to rid the world or Western Europe of Communism or hunger or poverty, though it was directed against all three. In an era grown increasingly cynical in part from excessive expectations and rhetorical posturing, such modesty is not unbecoming.



The most crucial lesson which a domestic program might glean from the initial Marshall Plan derives from its emphasis upon fundamental economic recovery rather than simply temporary relief and rehabilitation. In the contemporary urban context, this means that one must undertake an analysis, without mercy, of the urban malaise. Nor should one settle for palliatives, no matter how immediately attractive and beneficial they might seem. The issue of welfare reform and financing, for example, has elicited particular attention, especially from New York City representatives. It is argued, with some justification, that since welfare is essentially a national problem, it should be addressed and financed at that level. Federalization would reduce by nearly a billion dollars New York City's expenditures, thus easing its fiscal burdens. But to many cities, such welfare reform is irrelevant. In such urbanized, industrial states as Pennsylvania, Michigan, Illinois, Ohio and Massachusetts, local units of government do not contribute to the cost of AFDC and Medicaid. New York is one of the few regressive states that imposes upon its cities the heavy fiscal burden of funding locally a significant proportion of its welfare expenditures. Financial reform of welfare might benefit hard-pressed state finances but not necessarily those of decaying cities, like Detroit or Philadelphia, which contribute little, if anything, to the cost of local welfare.

More fundamentally, welfare reform does not approach the central issue of urban decay. The crucial problem confronting New York or Buffalo or Detroit is ultimately quite simple to describe, if not to remedy. Too many cities suffer from the impoverished status of their resident populations. To whatever factors—demographic, educational, sociological, political—one attributes such a condition, it is central to our understanding of the urban malaise.

No city can long remain healthy that is disproportionately inhabited by lower status people who are living in a society that is predominantly middle and upper status. Thus it is of critical importance that median family income in New York City relative to the national median, for example, has been shrinking noticeably since at least 1959. At that time, New York's level of $6,091 exceeded the national figure by eight percent. Ten years later the two figures were at parity. By 1972, a decline of disastrous proportions in New York's income vis-à-vis the nation's had occurred, so that the local level ($10,039) was ten percent *below* national standards ($11,116). The continued disintegration of New York's economy would certainly not lead one to argue that this downward trend has been reversed. Elsewhere, in St. Louis and Boston, Baltimore and San Francisco for example, the income of residents has declined significantly, relative to national figures, between 1959 and 1976.

It is not possible to divorce a city's economic status from the composition and structure of its populace. In an ideal world it should not matter whether or not Detroit or Newark is predominantly black and Hispanic, but it is an undeniable fact that demographics does indeed affect economics. The composition of black and Hispanic families, for example, is not a matter of social insignificance. That over a third of black households are female-headed has serious *economic* repercussions due to the generally lower economic status of such families. More generally, persons who are older, younger, or marked by color, risk being outside the economic mainstream, earning less than the national median. Thus a city that is heavily minority in population is economically vulnerable for that basic reason. Newark's problems, for example, include the fact that the city is well over



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half black, and blacks, statistically speaking, are more likely to be poor. The fundamental problem is poverty, not race, but that differentiation is not always perceived and made.

Implicit in the preceding is the thesis that urban viability requires a certain middle-class presence. The public policy graveyard, however, is littered with schemes designed to retain or reattract middle income families to the city. Indeed, this approach constituted one of the primary philosophical underpinnings of the urban renewal legislation of the fifties and sixties. It is doubtful, however, that some new underfunded housing scheme, or a few additional policemen on the street, or mass transportation subsidies, will tempt many such persons to return to the urban Gomorrah. The anticipated and real pains will simply continue to outweigh the putative pleasures.

If this assumption is correct, then the only viable, alternative solution would appear to be the middle classing of a significant proportion of the current central city population. This requires the existence of a large number of varied employment opportunities for urban residents who will thus achieve upward mobility through the normal path of work. All this will not of course be inexpensive in dollars nor devoid of psychological discomfort and dislocation.

Why dwell so lengthily upon this line of thought? Quite simply because it is a matter of centrality. At this point in time, it does indeed matter what urban strategy is pursued, and that strategy depends upon one's perception of the problem. The Marshall Plan was successful in part because it aimed at achieving fundamental economic recovery and not temporary relief. Legislation aimed at welfare reform or mass transit subsidies, however well intentioned, misses the kernel of the matter. Such proposals are secondary, peripheral, not directed to the primary problem as defined above. They will not, of their nature, produce many, if any, jobs, whereas a jobs program will coincidentally alleviate welfare costs and render other problem areas moot.

Secondly, while acknowledging the existence and validity of other urban problems, it is probably wiser to marshal one's forces and concentrate attention and resources upon a single critical issue rather than losing precision by diffusion of resources. Bits of money and programs for a multitude of purposes may be good pork-barrel politics, but it is ineffective public policy and will not begin to solve even the problems they are ostensibly designed to solve. Ten such patches will prove far less efficacious than a single tourniquet.

Thirdly, income is the single most consistent and reliable predictor of a host of other socio-economic variables including educational outcomes, quality of housing, level of personal health. In other words, solve the income deficiency and much else will be provided.

In suggesting the above, I am of course aware of the existence of constraints—perceptual, political, geographic—upon passage of any urban program approaching adequacy. Nor should one attempt to gloss over this real and potent opposition. No intelligent general or tennis player or policymaker enters his particular field of combat without noting the strengths and positioning of his opponent and then planning to achieve his ends anyway. But obstacles, while they need to be acknowledged, are not the focus of this article. What I am saying is that if one is interested in beginning to salvage the central cities of this country, an extensive jobs program is the most effective primary approach; that anything else, however well-intentioned, will divert scarce human and fiscal resources to less vital areas; that a domestic Marshall Plan of sufficient scope will cost big money since an effective urban program on the cheap is self-contradictory; that enactment will require presidential and Congressional persistence and generosity in the face of inevitable and potent resistance.

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NANCY G. WESTERFIELD

### *THE MAN WHO SAW UFO'S*

Emeritus, where once he tumbled
Chains of his equations and the real numbers,
Now he is interviewed, porchborne,
Outside the disheveled household of his widowerhood,
And tells, with hands like toads, warted,
Fidgeting, how even the cat hackled
At one of them three houses wide,
Unbattening its azure portholes over the end
Of the street. The cat beside him,
Staring fixedly into the floorboards,
Confirms or denies nothing. Together,
They have stumbled upon a darkness
That humps itself beneath the porch floor
And the pavement in his street of happy endings,
Golden weddings, porch swings lamplit
Under the trumpet vines. His eyes
Are cowled, his forehead is tiers
Of questions, his ears hollowed
With listening: mousers, both of them.
In cosmic sums, cosmic geometries, he expounds,
With reference to the Hertzsprung-Russell diagram,
What signs he sees, pointing to floor
And heaven, what unidentifieds,
What luminosities; then with dignity retrieves
The cat, thanks the interviewer, retreats
Within dark doubledoors of tallwood
Behind dense blinds, an unidentity
Digiting down to two, to one,
Digiting toward the infinitude of none.



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# FOREIGN POUNDS AND PENCE

DESMOND FISHER

## Capital from abroad moves into Ireland

To the American reader, Ireland's unemployment statistics may seem trifling. But not to us in Ireland.

This is not to say that nothing is being done to help the Irish economy. One way is by attracting foreign investment. The newspaper cartoonist makes the point by printing the name "O'Hitachi" on his factory facade. A news story in an adjoining column, chronicling the achievement of a German or Japanese child in coming first in an Irish-language examination, might reinforce it. The point is that many hundreds of foreigners are settling in Ireland because foreign investment, on which Ireland's economic well-being increasingly depends, is growing.

Over the past 15 years, some 680 foreign projects, involving a total investment of almost £571 million ($1084 million), have been established in Ireland. The U.S. easily heads the list, accounting for 206 projects with an investment of £271 million ($515 million). Now, one in every seven of the 225,000 people employed in manufacturing industry in Ireland can thank an American investor for his or her job—usually in chemicals, pharmaceuticals, electronics, textiles, or engineering.

Foreign firms are attracted to Ireland for various reasons. Chief among them are the financial inducements, reckoned to be the most generous in the world, offered by the Industrial Development Authority, the state body responsible for attracting industrial investment. If you are a manufacturer setting up in Ireland, you can get complex tax relief on all profits made from exports until 1990. You get non-repayable capital grants of up to 60 percent; very substantial capital allowances —up to 120 percent in some cases—for tax purposes; training and research grants and easy repatriation of profits and dividends. Factories can be bought or leased at favorable rates; workers are easily recruited and natural resources, such as the clean water required in many manufacturing processes, are plentiful.

But heavy dependence on foreign investment has its critics too. They argue that foreign firms will stay in Ireland only until the inducements run out. In fact, the failure rate so far has been remarkably low and some 60 percent of new investment in 1976 came from companies already established in Ireland.

The question, unfortunately is not that simple. sive industries are the most easily attracted but Ireland wants more labor-intensive projects to ease her chronic unemployment problems. Fortunately, this is the way new foreign investment is developing, with a concentration on low-capital high-labor industries like electronics.

A still more cogent argument is that it would be better to encourage Irish investors to risk their capital at home rather than banking it abroad as many do. But a deep-rooted conservatism and reluctance to indulge in risk-taking investment has to be overcome first. Meantime, foreign investment is increasing.

That such a dependence can be precarious was amply demonstrated just before last Christmas when Ferenka, the Irish subsidiary of a Dutch multi-national organization, abruptly closed down its steel cord factory with the loss of 1,400 jobs. By U.S. standards this would be almost a non-event. In the Irish context, it assumed the dimensions of a national disaster and created a scare about the whole future of the drive to attract foreign investment to Ireland. Countries which compete with Ireland in this field gleefully publicized the Ferenka collapse, blaming it on Irish trade union intransigence. Ireland's Industrial Development Authority is, however, confident that its past successes will be repeated.

But despite the success to date in attracting overseas investors, the Irish unemployment rate at 9.5 percent is the worst in the EEC. And the official figure conceals the real dimensions since it does not include school-leavers or married women seeking employment.

Economists have estimated that 25,000-28,000 extra new jobs must be created every year for the next ten years to bring the unemployment total down to an acceptable level. This would involve capital investment of some £800 million-£900 million ($1500-$1700 million). Where investment on that scale is to come

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from is the major social concern at this time. Mr. Jack Lynch, who was swept back into power last June with a record 20-seat majority over the combined opposition, has made it his government's top priority. This creation of jobs, especially for the young people—and half of the Republic's 3.2 million population is now under 25—is the national aim.

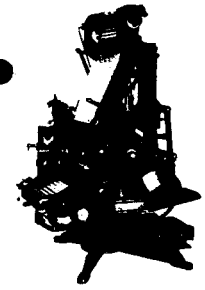
Success depends on two main factors. One is the continued capacity of the Industrial Development Authority to attract foreign investors. For 1977, the net increase in jobs is expected to be between 8000-10,000, after taking into account the 10,000 or so redundancies during the year. Clearly, the IDA has no hope of achieving the 25,000 net new jobs a year required to meet the long-term target. But Mr. Lynch has pledged his government to create 20,000 jobs in its first year in office. How that target can be achieved by June next is problematical.

The second major step to put the economy to rights is to conclude a satisfactory national wage agreement in the next month or so. Ireland has had such agreements since 1970 and they have been largely responsible for keeping wage demands within acceptable limits. The Government is insisting on a maximum 5 percent rise as part of a package involving abolition of car tax, a reduction in social welfare contributions for lower-paid workers and £130 million in income tax reduction. All this, they claim, could mean a 12 percent increase in actual take-home pay and the resultant fillip to the economy would produce the new jobs needed. In effect, the trade union movement is being told that it can either have high wage increases or more jobs but not both.

With a massive borrowing program in prospect to provide job-creating investment, a major challenge to reduce unemployment and the threat to foreign investment posed by the Ferenka factory closure, the prospects for the Irish economy might seem anything but bright. Indeed, Mr. Lynch himself warned recently in Dáil Eireann that the stability of society itself was at stake unless the government's pay-and-prices package could succeed. The plan could, he added, bring the country to a prosperity it had never before experienced but by taking the wrong direction it could be plunged into the sort of recession from which it is just emerging. But despite the difficulties, the economists are predicting a boom-year ahead with a growth rate of 7 percent and the inflation rate, which was as high as 20.6 percent in 1976, cut to 7 percent.

The apparent contradiction underlines the comment frequently made about the mercurial performance of the Irish economy and the national optimism—or is it fecklessness—of the Irish people: that things are either serious but not desperate or desperate but not serious. Perhaps 1978 will show more clearly which way the wind is blowing.

**THE LIVES OF WRITERS**



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No crueler writer ever lived. If he were a lepidopterist (and he is, in his way) he wouldn't find his pleasure in the chase, out there in the fields with his net and his handbook, creeping up on a butterfly as it rested on a twig, its beautiful wings breathing in and out. He'd like that well enough—the wonderful moment when you know you're going to get it—but the real pleasure would come later, as he shook it gently into his choloroform bottle, careful not to disturb the dust on its gorgeous wings, and later still, back in his study, when he took a plain steel pin, the kind tailors use, and skewered the plump little dead body to the mat board in his display case. A perfect specimen of its type. *Nailed.*

Tom Wolfe is not a generous writer. He's gifted in almost heroic proportion, not only with the writer's ear for irresistible words (a common enough talent, in truth), but with independence of mind, an amiable manner which persuades people to tell him things, and a genius for effortless self-promotion. He's not just good at what he does; he's a figure as well, somebody in particular, a presence, unique. People instinctively see his work as a whole; each new article enlarges our perception of who he is. It's hard to say what he'll add up to in the end, but he has certainly burst the cocoon of anonymity, and his ability gives him a fair shot at being the sort of writer people call great. But no one ever called Tom Wolfe generous.

His peculiar gift is for satire, but it is satire of an odd sort. He is not like Juvenal, angry and excoriating, animated by fierce passion. Far from it. His portraits are pitiless enough, but he seems to speak from a great distance, as if none of this mattered very greatly to him. Occasionally he speaks of himself as "the man in the white suit," amused and remote, a visitor at the carnival taking in the sideshows. His targets are ordinary humbug, inflated self-esteem, cant, childish preoccupation with style confused and timid sensibilities. His world is a pampered place, fiilled with the rich, sometimes pugnacious follies of the over-protected. But Wolfe is not trying to reform us; the silliness amuses him, just as it would have amused him at the court of Louis XIV. He might have written a fine piece about the Duc de Saint Simon, who would strut and preen for a month in the afterglow of an amiable remark by the King. Unlike Juvenal, Wolfe does not long for a braver age. There is no Puritan or Republican fire in him. He is amused



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in the manner of a man convinced that human nature is immutable, and it is his strength to see that our age is as sunk in vanity and folly as all the rest.

Take his portrait of the "well-known American Writer" X in *Mauve Gloves & Madmen, Clutter & Vine*, author of *Under Uncle's Thumb* and about to embark on a new work. X is sitting in his study in his seven-room apartment on Manhattan's Upper West Side. A pile of bills is on the desk in front of him. He unzips the cover of his pocket calculator and begins to add up what it costs him to live for a year—$1,000 a month for the maintenance and mortgage on his apartment, nearly $7,000 for private schools for his two children, another $7,000 for the place on Martha's Vineyard. And that doesn't even count the ordinary bills, the $800 owing for a cocktail party last month, the $500 for library stairs specially made in Hong Kong, the $248 for a pair of boots made in England. X is adding it all up—*chuck! chuck! chuck!*—as he taps the keys on his little calculator.

But really he is only putting off the moment of work, mulling over the way he lives now. (Not brooding; it is clear Wolfe doesn't think X has the depth for honest brooding over anything much larger than a fancied slight to his dignity.) He is thinking about the Vineyard—an absolute necessity! it isn't *fair* to keep the kids in the city all summer—and the people that he has been meeting there, important people, *big* people, the kind whose intimacy can help to make him big too.

And he's thinking about those $248 boots, caked with mud in the back of his closet. He wore them to his father's funeral on a rainy day in Chicago, but somehow, he just couldn't wipe the mud off those boots. His father had been an immigrant from Russia, a tailor throughout the Depression, a self-educated man who could quote Goethe and Dante in his heavy accent. And somehow, thinking of his father's life and his own life, X couldn't wipe the mud off those boots. When he got home he tossed them into the back of his closet where they lie still, curling and cracking.

Another writer might have done something else with those boots. He might have inverted the story, turning it inside out like a sock, and made them the point rather than merely an episode. Those boots are telling X his life is hollow and empty; they speak to whatever is honest in him. But not Wolfe; he's tougher than that. Never give an inch. X treasures those boots because they prove his sensibility. He's almost proud of them. If people only *knew*. . .

Besides, Wolfe has got another point in mind, and he isn't about to let it slip away. X has already been nailed with his own pretense and tender self-regard, but there is one detail more in Wolfe's portrait of the well-known American writer. X puts away his calculator and daydreams. He rolls a clean sheet of paper into his typewriter, and taps out the working title of his new book:

*Recession and Repression*
*Police State America*
*And the Spirit of '76*

It would be unfair, if it weren't true. There are writers like this. Wolfe artfully declines to name his victim, but anyone who regularly reads the political journalism which comes out of New York editorial offices can think of half a dozen candidates off the top of his head. The writers with agents like sharks and gold American Express cards who would turn murderous if Elaine ever put them in the back room. The kind of writers who snickered about the Nixons in private, and sneered in print. Slick champions of Democracy, Justice and Freedom, their own lives are as filled with poisonous intrigue as a Florentine court. Self-appointed defenders of the poor and oppressed, they can burn their way through enough money in a year to support a woman with six children on welfare for a decade. Their work is a crisp catalog of public sin and corruption, but they melt in the company of the great, toads slipping their way through crowds of people with drinks in their hands, trying to get *close*.....

New York writers, and a lot of their cousins elsewhere, are indeed cursed with a kind of mandarin attitude towards the world. Their animosity towards business in all its forms has about it a touch of 19th-century disdain for trade. The people who mattered had incomes, not jobs. It is not much different now. No one in his right mind would go into *business*. Advertisingmen are whores, corporate executives all thieves, public officials corrupt, ordinary people with ordinary jobs objects of pity. Mandarin writers are hypocritically, even willfully blind to the realities of economic life. Someone has to support *them* after all; someone has to build and run those businesses which sustain the government with its billions in taxes, and buy the ads in the magazines which run the mandarins' work. But the new mandarins brush all that aside with the same wave of contempt; America is all hustle and ticky-tacky.

It is the same with almost every other aspect of national life: a willful blindness to the sheer complexity of the world, a reduction of genuine dilemmas to cheap moral certitude. How are we to end the arms race? How are we to free the banished classes of poor from their awful dependence on cold institutions? How are we to sustain our economy as we slide down toward the bottleneck of diminishing resources? How are we to keep the generators running without strip-mining, nuclear plants and imported oil? Such questions pose no problems for the new mandarins. In their snug minds there is an answer to everything, and it is only accident their answers never threaten *them* with war, un-

*(Continued on page 147)*



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# BOOKS

## FOR BROTHERHOOD AND SISTERHOOD

### For Children and Young Adults

**The following titles have been selected from among the many published from August, 1975 through July, 1976 to cover a wide range of ages, interests and readability. Those books have been listed which seem best to portray relationships among people of different origins, races and religions, and depict their varied background. The list is the result of unanimous agreement by a representative committee of the best in the field for children and young adults.**

*Selected by . . .*

EDITH G. SELIG, Supervisor

LUCIA ENGLE, formerly Director, School Libraries New York City Board of Education.

JOSETTE FRANK, Child Study Association of America/Wel-met.

NORA KRAMER, Consultant on Books for Children and Young People. Director, the Bookplan.

LILLIAN MORRISON, Coordinator of Young Adult Services, The New York Public Library.

BARBARA ROLLOCK, Coordinator of Children's Services, The New York Public Library.

LILLIAN SHAPIRO, School Library Consultant.

ETHNA SHEEHAN, Free Lance Writer. Formerly a professor of literature for children and young people at St. John's University. Also Coordinator of Children's Services, the Queensborough Public Library.

### This selection from the complete list is presented by the publishers named below

**Home Before Dark**, by Sue Ellen Bridges. Knopf, 1976,. $6.95

This honest and unsparing story of Stella Willis's life as the daughter of poor sharecroppers presents an example of the strength and early maturity required of many young people from whom little of the seamier side of life is concealed. Sheer survival takes precedence over the niceties of social behavior. (12-16)

**Taking Root: Jewish Immigrants in America,** by Milton Meltzer. Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1976. $7.95

Drawn from the experience of his parents, who migrated from Eastern Europe, and from the written and spoken memories of many contemporaries, this gifted biographer-historian continues his illuminative, well-researched history of Jewish settlers in America from the late 1800s to about 1920. He describes vividly the incredible suffering they endured, and the unique guiding principle of seeking the "Takhlis" (end-goal) that lent to some the courage to leave the village, and helped them to survive and take root in America. The book sings with love, pride, concern, and a deep identification with his people (12 and up)

**Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry**, by Mildred D. Taylor Dial. 1976. $7.95

The most noteworthy feature in this story of young Cassie Logan and her family is the sense of pride and dignity. With sensitivity, the author recreates the struggles of a black family during the Depression in a society hostile to their dreams. The 1976 Newbery award-winning book. (11-14)

**The Sound of Flutes and Other Indian Legends,** translated and edited by Richard Erdoes. Pictures by Paul Goble. Pantheon. 1976. $6.99

A delightful collection of tales gathered from contemporary American Indian storytellers. Included are stories with creation themes, trickster tales, stories of brave women in battle, and many stories about the Indian's view of the white man. The collection reflects the rich oral heritage of Native Americans and affords a unique glimpse of the mysticism and humor inherent in Indian lore. (10 and up)

**Women of Courage: from Revolutionary Times to the Present,** by Margaret Truman. Illustrated with photographs. William Morrow & Co., 1976. $7.95

A vigorous personal assessment of the quality of courage—physical, moral, spiritual—exemplified by dedicated women, some little known, in American life. Often vilified and persecuted, faced iwth violent prejudices, they battled for various causes they believed to be right. A book to inspire and encourage young people today. (13 and up)

**What About Me?,** by Gertie Evenhuis. Thomas Nelson Inc., 1976. $5.95

Through the eyes of eleven-year-old Dirk, living in German-occupied Amsterdam in the year 1943, we gain an awareness of what it is like to suffer the consequences of war—shortage of food, curfews, loss of personal liberty—and an appreciation for the courage of those who risk their lives to resist tyranny. (9-12)

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## For the complete Books for Brotherhood/Sisterhood list write to: The National Conference of Christians and Jews, 43 W. 57th St., New York, N. Y. 10019

**Hostages to Fortune,** by Joan Lingard. Nelson, 1977. $6.95

The difference in religion between Protestant Sadie and Catholic Kevin is but one of the problems the young couple who have emigrated from Northern Ireland to England face in this sequel to **A Proper Place.** A runaway sister, a difficult mother, and unemployment complicate their relationship. The author candidly highlights some believable marital problems of young marrieds. (14 and up)

**The Journey Back,** by Johanna Reiss. Thomas Y. Crowell Co., 1976. $6.95

The exquisitely sensitive evaluation that created the author's **The Upstairs Room,** is responsible for this equally moving sequel. The recreating of war-broken family relationships of three sisters and their father in post-war Holland is told in delicate implication and gently defined action and reaction. The whole comes full circle in a summing-up of the family's return visits to Holland from America. (11-14)

**To Jerusalem and Back,** by Saul Bellow. Viking, 1976. $8.95

A renowned American writer shares with us his personal recollections of a visit to Israel in 1975. Through him we meet such outstanding people as Mayor Teddy Kollek, as well as visiting celebrities from other countries. The sketches of people and places visited leave us with an intimate picture of the country, a deeper understanding of Zionism and of the serious problems which these courageous people face. (16 and up)

**The Lost Boy,** by Frances Leigh. Dutton, 1976. $6.95

This unusual story set in Indonesia examines the questions of cultural differences and circumstances of environment. When a British family houses an eight-year-old, their response to his "uncivilized" habits is a conviction that he could not be their long-lost son or brother. Discovery of the child's true identity provides a satisfying climax to the book. (10-12)

**Harriet and the Runaway Book: The Story of Harriet Beecher Stowe and Uncle Tom's Cabin,** by Johanna Johnson. Illustrated by Ronald Himler. Harper & Row, 1977. $5.95

Harriet Beecher began to understand the miseries of slavery when her family moved to Cincinnati, close to slave-holding Kentucky. The Fugitive Slave Act, passed after she was married to Calvin Stowe and had returned to her native New England, intensified her anguish and prompted her to write **Uncle Tom's Cabin,** which did so much to prepare people for Emancipation. (7-10)

**Louis Armstrong,** by Genie Iverson. Illustrated by Kevin Brooks. Thomas Y. Crowell Co., 1976. $5.95

"Satchelmouth," later to be known affectionately as "Satchmo," learned about trouble early. However his detention in the New Orleans "Colored Waifs' Home for Boys" led to the music which would make him and audiences around the world happy. A hopeful biography for young people written in simple prose. (8-11)

**Martin Luther King, Jr., a Documentary . . . Montgomery to Memphis,** edited by Flip Schulke, W. W. Norton, 1976. $10.00

A visually impressive collection of black and white photographs detailing highlights of the non-violent strategies used by the late Dr. King and his followers to remove segregation and to eliminate blatant racial, social and economic injustices from the Black Experience. Includes Dr. King's important speeches and sermons, a chronology of his life, and an inspiring introduction by his widow. (14 and up)

**The Names,** by N. Scott Momaday. Harper & Row, 1976. $10.00

In writing which is poetic prose, Momaday traces his ancestry, giving us a feeling for the roots of American Indians and a picture of family closeness. The strong relationship to nature, the legend-like quality of the narrative, and the family album photographs make this a very special title. (14 and up)

**Return to South Town,** by Lorenz Graham. Thomas Y. Crowell Co., 1976. $6.50

After a childhood in the South, and a memory of escaping white persecution by moving with his family to the North, David Williams realizes his lifelong ambition to be a doctor and practice among his people in the South. In this fourth volume, in a South somewhat changed. Doctor Williams's determination to proceed with dignity and a strong assertion of his own sense of right and wrong brings him in good measure the ends he seeks. (10-13)

**From Slave to Abolition: The Life of William Wells Brown,** adapted by Lucille Schulberg Warner: Illustrated by Tom Feelings. Dial, 1976. $6.95

Using the "Narrative of William Wells Brown, a Fugitive Slave" and other of his many anti-slavery writings and speeches as resources, the author creates an autobiography of the first black American to write and to publish two novels, a play and several histories. Brown is also recognized as the first black man in the United States to earn a living from his writings. (9-12)

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**Arilla Sun Down,** by Virginia Hamilton. Greenwillow, 1976. $7.95

In this skillfully crafted novel, the Newbery-winning author probes the intricate relationships in a family influenced by its mixed black and Amerindian heritage. A special book for older readers. (12 and up)

**The Older Voice: Twentieth-Century Women's Poetry in Translation,** edited by Joanne Bankier and others. W. W. Norton & Co., 1976. $10.00

Poems by 75 women from all over the world, many of whom have never received proper recognition. The poets write in Greek, Chinese, Hebrew, Eskimo and other languages, but they speak as women, cutting across national, cultural and social boundaries. (14 and up)

**Mary McLeod Bethune,** by Eloise Greenfield. Illustrated by Jerry Pinkney. Thomas Y. Crowell Co., 1977. $6.95

"I leave you faith, I leave you hope, I leave you love" is a fitting ending to a simply written biography of the black woman whose lifelong dedication to the education of her people brought her to national attention during the Franklin D. Roosevelt administration. (7-9)

**Three Stalks of Corn,** written and illustrated by Leo Politi. Charles Scribner's Sons, 1976. $6.95

A little Mexican-American girl in California listens as her grandmother tells her the old legends of her homeland, especially about corn. Angelida learns many things as she helps prepare the traditional Mexican foods for a fiesta. Colorful, full-page pictures illuminate a gentle text. (6-9)

**Nine Black American Doctors,** by Robert C. Hayden and Jacqueline Harris. Addison, 1976. $6.50

An interesting account which includes among the nine, two women and one dentist who overcame the obstacles of prejudice and or humble beginnings to become prominent in their field. The intent is to inspire and encourage minority youngsters who might have an inclination for the medical research or medical science fields. (11 and up)

**Ashanti to Zulu: African Traditions,** by Margaret Musgrove. Pictures by Leo and Diane Dillon. Dial, 1976. $8.95

This elegantly beautiful 1977 Caldecott Award winner transcends all realms of the picture or alphabet book. With precise clarity of text and magnificent jewel-toned paintings, each letter from A to Z portrays traditions of a different African Tribe. (all ages)

**Bitter Herbs and Honey,** by Barbara Cohen. Lothrop. Lee and Shepard, 1976. $5.95

An American girl of 1916 is torn between her yearning for a college education and the desire of her loving Orthodox Jewish parents that she marry young within their own milieu. Good psychology, a little romance, and holidays. (11-16)

**Equal! The Case of Integration vs. Jim Crow,** by Leonard A. Stevens. Coward, McCann & Geoghegan, 1976. $5.86

The struggle against Jim Crow in American public schools is presented here in anecdotal, narrative style. We are taken, case by Supreme Court case, to the 1954 decision under Chief Justice Warren outlawing segregation in **Brown vs. the Board of Education.** (12 and up)

**Luis Munoz Marin: The Man Who Remade Puerto Rico,** by Peggy Mann. Coward, McCann & Geoghegan, 1976. $5.86

Through this biography of one of Puerto Rico's best-known citizens—its recent Governor—the political life and social and economic problems of that island are vividly portrayed. (11-14)

**Enter the Irish-American,** by Edward Wakin. Thomas Y. Crowell Co., 1976. $9.95

A lively, readable record of the Irish immigration to the United States from the time of the Great Famine to World War I. Through a good intermingling of narrative and quotations from personal accounts, we learn what it meant to be Irish in America during the period 1820-1920. (14 and up)

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**The Amazing Miss Laura**, by Hila Colman. William Morrow & Co., 1976. $5.95

Growing up in a Polish-American family in Connecticut, a young girl rebels against the "old ways" of her aging grandfather who dominates the home. Seeking escape, she unexpectedly finds herself involved in the problems of an old lady, a neighborhood aristocrat, and comes to a better understanding of old people, and of herself. (13 and up)

**A Girl Named Wendy,** by Beverly Butler. Dodd, Mead, 1976. $4.95

Fiercely loyal to her Indian heritage, Wendy rejects her aunt's efforts to fit her into her pleasant white Milwaukee suburb, and runs off to her great-grandmother's Reservation shack with her little sister. It takes a near-tragedy to prove to her that Indian traditions and values can merge with the white folks' principles and technical knowledge to the benefit of everyone. (11-14)

**Alone Amid All This Noise: A Collection of Women's Poetry,** selected by Ann Reit. Four Winds Press, 1976. $6.95

A collection of poetry by women through the ages, arranged chronologically from Sappho (612-557 BC) and Lady Otomo of 8th century Japan to Sylvia Plath (1932-1963) and Marge Piercy writing in America today. The themes are universal—romantic love, aging, motherhood, independence. (12 and up)

**All It Takes Is Practice,** by Betty Miles. Knopf (Random House), 1976. $5.99

The friendly new boy in school whom Stuart admires is the son of an interracial couple. By presenting a child's first encounter with prejudice and violence in a small Midwestern community, the author highlights a contemporary problem. Children will also identify with the basketball daydreams of the shy hero and his active next-door neighbor and friend who is a girl. (9-12)

**Grandparents Around the World,** by Dorka Raynor. Photographs. Albert Whitman & Co., 1977. $6.50

Full-page "on-location" photographs, thoughtfully selected, portray grandparents in many countries, in native dress, doing what comes naturally—caring for, playing with and loving their grandchildren. No text, none is needed to convey this universal theme. (all ages)

**From Canton to California: The Epic of Chinese Immigration,** by Corinne K. Hoexter. Four Winds Press, 1976. $8.95

A scholarly, well-documented history of the Chinese people in America, against a cultural background beginning with Confucius. It is fascinating reading, with particular values for Chinese-American youth. An inspiring chronicle of the great Dr. Ng Poon Chew, who established the first Chinese daily newspaper in the U.S., is part of a well-rounded, continuing picture of the quite considerable contribution of the Chinese to life in America. (14 and up)

employment lines, schools that don't teach, cold houses, or the loss of those precious two months on the Vineyard.

Wolfe's "well-known American writer" is out there all right. He is probably snickering over something in the Sunday *Times* right now, thinking of stirring himself for a late brunch at One/Fifth, eyeing his wife across the breakfast table and wondering how he can engineer a free moment to phone that girl he met at a party the night before, the one who said she just *loves* writers.

So why do I call Wolfe the least generous of writers? Well, his choice of subjects seems so odd and arbitrary. If the mandarins exist, paid too much for too little, and not so much made as destroyed by their good fortune, nevertheless they are few in number. There may be a grotesque disparity between their satiny lives and their public *personae* of gritty iconoclasm, but they are very far from being representative of the lives of writers as they are more generally lived. The truth of the matter is that no profession is so ill-paid as writing. Everybody involved in the production of a book—from the editor on down to the stockroom boy—makes a living of *some* sort, with one exception: the author. He, more often than not, is working for free. The major trade publishers issue perhaps 12,000-15,000 new titles a year—it depends on what you're willing to call a book—but I should be very much surprised if as many as two hundred of their authors were actually living on what they earned from writing.

How do they live then? Partly by writing for magazines, exhausting work which pays badly—as little as $50 or $75 for a book review, rarely more than $1,500 for a major article. More often by teaching on the side (from $800 to $1,500 a semester, depending on the school), or by doing free-lance editorial work, or on grants (for which you pay in spiritual coin ten times over), or by depending on a wife or husband with a regular job, or by living on savings. Most of them don't last long. You see their names for a year or two, and then they break and disappear. Their credit cards are withdrawn, their savings gone, their agents sorry to report that the best offer for a book was $5,000. Some few manage to handle a job as well as freelancing on the side, perhaps even managing a book or two, always hoping for the freedom which might come with a big paperback contract. Disappointment is the air they breathe. It is not that their work is second-rate (although financial desperation will kill a talent quicker than anything else), but that there is not much demand for it. It seems there are a lot of magazines when you try to read them all, but there aren't so many really, and most of them are poor too. Writers do not work for free from choice, but from necessity. It is not often the world will pay a man a living wage simply to hear what he's got on his mind. Read George Gissing's *New*



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*Grub Street*; it hasn't changed one whit.

Wolfe's "well-known American writer" was settling down to a book on recession and repression, an ambiguous exercise for one so free from both. But there *was* a recession, and it was not so long ago that repression was very much the mood of Washington. Who wrote about the hardship and the danger? It certainly wasn't Wolfe, who was writing about "The Girl of the Year" during Vietnam, and the ballooning pretensions of modern painting during Watergate. His choice of subjects is his business—and I would certainly rather have him write about ephemeral peacocks, than not to write at all—but it doesn't sit well for him to speak with such scorn of those with a shade broader interests.

He could say in his defense—although he is certainly not a man given to defending himself—that his target is the "well-known American writer" who makes such a good thing out of bad things, but it is not the mandarins who write about war, injustice and threats to freedom in any important way. They borrow attitudes which have already won the day. The people who have gone before are a mottlier crew, armed with nothing but their own passion and conscience, publishing in small magazines, living as they can, trying to hold out against the world's indifference. Not many of them last; all are heroes in their way.

They have their failings—intolerance, perhaps, or a tendency to exaggerated alarm—but superciliousness is not one of them. They remind me of Samuel Johnson and Richard Savage, wandering the streets of London all night for want of the price of a bed. They were "not at all depressed by their situation," Johnson later told Joshua Reynolds, "but in high spirits and brimful of patriotism, traversed the square for several hours, inveighed against the minister, and 'resolved they would *stand by their country*.' "

The "well-known American writer," meanwhile, is wondering how to squeeze a clause on advertising into his contract, and Wolfe is going through his check stubs, with a smile of distant amusement.

THOMAS POWERS

**THE HEART OF THE MATTER**

# THE SCREEN

It's as if Werner Herzog's films have come into my mind by an immaculate conception—as if I had been touched by them with the tongues of fire. As I admitted in a column on Herzog I wrote last year, the first film of his I ever saw, *Fata Morgana*, seemed to me incomprehensible. I walked out on it. But when I began again later with a different film, and saw more of them, I found that all at once they made perfect sense. The scales fell away from my eyes so that now Herzog's work appears to me so whole, so original, I can't leave off talking about it. *Fata Morgana* is in fact a kind of *spiritus mundi* in which Herzog created his own body of myths and from which he draws various esoteric images for his other films. In the most recent one to be distributed in this country, *Hearts of Glass*, at the very heart of the film a cowherd named Hias (Josef Bierbickler) who is gifted with second sight has a vision of a sulphur pool, which is one of the images of elemental nature in *Fata Morgana*. It is an image of fire and ice, the encrustations of sulphur disgorged by the hot water looking as if they were something frozen on the edge of the pool.

*Hearts of Glass* seems to resonate with other Herzog films too. In the village which is the film's setting, for instance, there is a patriarch (Wilhelm Friedrich), the owner of the glass works which is the village's sole industry, who is senile and only chortles feebly at everything said to him. It is a response to life that sounds like a hollow echo of the boisterous, constant giggling done by one of the characters in *Even Dwarfs Started Small*, which is another Herzog film about an isolated community that has become a world unto itself. The Herzog film to which *Hearts of Glass* seems to demand comparison, however, is *Aguirre, the Wrath of God*. Besides both being set in remote historical time—*Aguirre* is about Pizarro's 1560 expedition in search of El Dorado, and *Hearts of Glass* is set indefinitely in an epoch that seems to run from the Middle Ages up to the nineteenth century—both films open and close very similarly. In the beginning of each is the image—a spectacular image of nature, an image whose beauty will, Herzog hopes, jolt us free from our attachments to the everyday reality of a modern world.

In both films the opening imagery also prefigures in some way the story that is to follow. In *Aguirre* this image is of a seemingly endless column of soldiers, bearers, missionaries and explorers in Pizarro's party that stretches down a winding mountain trail dense with tropical vegetation. The trail is like a river of men, and of the paraphernalia of civilization, flowing through the jungle; and as such it anticipates the doomed attempt to reach the sea that a detachment led by one of Pizarro's lieutenants, Aguirre (Klaus Kinski), is to make on the Amazon River. In *Hearts of Glass* the opening is more complex. First Hias sits in a field looking out on a landscape over which pour (through time-lapse photography) great torrents of mist. Then he sits on a precipice where he predicts the world will end, at which we see, superimposed translucently on a ground of cloth, water falling with enormous force down a mountain. In effect the two images complement each other. The mist in the first *looks like* the waterfall in the second. But in the first what we see,



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though it exists in reality, is only an illusion of a waterfall. In the second the torrent that we see is real enough all right, except that the image itself only exists in Hias's imagination. Superimposed on a field of rough cloth, this second waterfall is but a tapestry woven from dreams and visions.

Because Herzog's films are *sui generis*, they have to set their own terms right at the outset. Although these illusions of water are in a sense drawn like other Herzog images from *Fata Morgana*, which plays a good deal with the mirages in a desert, the imagery as used here establishes certain ground rules for the imagination to follow in this film alone. For *Hearts of Glass* is in general about the greater reality of imaginary experiences and the illusoriness of the world that seems present and "real." Like every Herzog film, this one deals with a mystery around which all the characters dance a circle, trying, but failing, to solve it. The mystery in this film is that of the "ruby" glass which the economy of the village depends upon and whose secret has died with one of the glass-blowers. One way or another almost everybody in the village begins constructing and living in a fantasy world of hypotheses about the glass when their search for its secret proves unavailing. The young man who is to inherit the glass works (Stefan Huttler) becomes so obssessed with the fancy that the secret is blood, he murders a girl in order to provide this ingredient. Then in the derangement that results, he burns down his own factory.

The only one who has no interest in all these machinations is Hias. But he becomes involved anyway when he has to come into the village and the factory owner's son asks him to divine what the secret is. Because he divines instead that some terrible cataclysm will occur, the townsfolk, thinking Hias at fault for whatever he prophesies, throw him into a dungeon with the owner's son after the latter has burned down the factory. Peering out of the bars, Hias longs for the freedom to return to the woods and mountains, and we instantly find him doing just that, climbing the same hillside we saw him descend when he came into the village. The reason he came was to get help killing a bear, and as he climbs now he is suddenly attacked by some creature invisible to us that springs upon him in the melting snow from a cave. With knife drawn Hias rolls over and over on the ground, wrestling the mythic beast until at last he's killed it. Whether he is wrestling in reality with a non-existent bear, or he himself is in this adventure only a figment of his own imagination as he languishes in prison, it is impossible to say. But for the village's story to end with a dream within a dream would only be right. People have done nothing except wrestle with phantasms the whole film long.

The historical world Herzog has created here—the obscure, local world that existed before the "global" village—was one where men lived intensely among invisible presences and imagined bogies. This is why Herzog's film allows the interpenetration of the realms of fantasy and reality until, in the end, we can no longer tell which we are in. The habit of separating them is a strictly modern one. The ultimate mystery at the center of the characters' lives in this film is the secret of the ruby glass, just as the mystery at the center of the struggle to survive in *Aguirre* is El Dorado. For us, however, the mystery at the center of each film is somewhat different: it is the characters themselves. A number of Herzog's films have ended with an image of someone circling around a mystery which can never be known. In both *Dwarfs* and *Stroszek*, this takes the form of a driverless truck circling the empty space, the void, which the truck's own motion describes.

But in *Aguirre* and *Hearts of Glass* the image is less nihilistic, less determined by a modern emptiness. In *Aguirre* it is we who circle, and at the center lies the historical mystery, Aguirre himself, the last one left standing on his raft, which the camera swoops down on from the river and circumscribes. In *Hearts of Glass* we swoop down from the air and circle around a variety of figures standing on a barren rock island that rises sheer from the sea. This island is a type of the insular community in which the film has taken place, and the implication of our encirclement of it is that it is an unknowable past standing in the sea of time.

COLIN L. WESTERBECK, JR.

STUART DYBEK

## *MILKWEED*

Pods split
as you pass;

dry field pinging
with black grasshoppers,

while cabbage butterflies
whiten air.

And later, windows rolled down,
speeding the two lane

back to a life
as if you really

wanted to get there,
the car becomes

a private blizzard
of milkweed silk.



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# IS THE INCARNATION A MYTH?

HERBERT McCABE

There is a view that Jesus was not quite as human as we are—that he was the Son of God disguised as a man, not a real man. The authors of *The Myth of God Incarnate*,* some of whom I suspect of having been brought up on this docetist heresy, are in revulsion against it. They reject it, however, not because the Church long ago threw it out as an option incompatible with her life, a heresy, but because it is found to be incompatible with the European way of life in the second half of the twentieth century. It seems odd for Christians to reject a doctrine on these grounds, since it is the very heart of the Gospel to challenge conventional and accepted attitudes in any age; still, they do reject docetism, and that can't be bad.

When Christians do this it is customary for them to do so in the name of the incarnation, the doctrine that the one person, Jesus, was both fully human and fully divine. What is peculiar to these authors is that they think the rejection of docetism involves also the rejection of its contrary, the incarnation. At least I think they are rejecting it. Professor Maurice Wiles at first talks definitely about a "Christianity *without* incarnation," but then goes on to speak of it as a 'myth,' and it is not at all clear whether a myth is always meant to be an untruth. Sometimes the authors merely seem to mean by 'mythical' the same as 'subject to the limitations of religious language.' I do not think they have any very clear analysis or critique of religious language (they do not, for instance, distinguish between analogy and metaphor) and I do not find their use of 'myth' here particularly helpful or illuminating, but if all they are trying to say boils down to the assertion that the doctrine of the incarnation is a religious or theological statement like any other, then, of course what they say is right though not very interesting.

The question remains whether it is possible to have an authentic version of the Christian faith which specifically *denies* this religious statement. This question is a little obscured by the fact that at least one of the authors, (Frances Young) holds, part of the time, the doctrine (usually associated with the medieval Latin Averroists) of the Double Truth—that a statement can be false in philosophy but true in theology: this position is not open to rational discussion. She does not, however, hold it with much conviction for she rapidly switches to quite different talk of 'different models'—inevitably bringing up the example of wave/particle models in physics. When some physicists bring out a book called "The Myth of Quantum Mechanics" we shall begin to think there might be a real parallel here.

Of course the doctrine that Jesus is one person in two natures is a theological interpretation of Jesus, and of course it may be replaced by another interpretation using quite different language; Christians managed without a doctrine expressed in these terms for quite a long time and they may turn out to do so again. It is, however, an altogether different matter to use the *same* terms and to deny the doctrine.

Maurice Wiles provides us (p. 2) with a useful parallel from the doctrine of the eucharist. He says that just as many Christians manage without the doctrine of transubstantiation so they may manage without the doctrine of the incarnation. He disregards, however, the two quite distinct ways in which transubstantiation may be (and has been) dropped. It has been dropped by, for example, transignificationists who think they have a *better* way of saying that the consecrated bread and wine are really the body and blood of Christ, on the other hand it has also been dropped by Zwinglians who want to say that the consecrated elements are *not* the real body and blood of Christ but mere representations of it. The former view may reasonably be claimed as a development of doctrine, recognizable in that it puts the whole matter in an entirely new light and calls for a new language; the latter is a denial of the doctrine couched in approximately the same language.

Now in which of these senses do these authors propose to manage without the incarnation? We are accustomed by now to Professor Wiles's wholly admirable plea for real theology—theology in the sense that it was practiced by, say, Thomas Aquinas (and by Wiles himself) which is not just exegesis of the Bible or the Fathers but the asking of radical questions and the application of critical intelligence to the formulation of our belief. It was such thinking that produced the Chalcedonian, and for that matter the Thomist, versions of the incarnation, and there is every reason to hope that similar work done by minds illuminated by Darwin, Marx, Freud, Einstein, Heidegger and Wittgenstein will produce its own account of Jesus and his meaning. But, alas, not in this book: for it is in large part devoted to a docetist misunderstanding of the incarnation. "A literal incarnation doctrine expressed in however sophisticated a form cannot avoid some element of docetism and involves

*Westminster, edited by John Hick, paper, $4.95.



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the believer in claims for uniqueness which seem straightforwardly incredible to the majority of our contemporaries." (Frances Young p. 32) This is the central assertion of the book and no attempt whatever is made to show that the first part of it is true. Instead we are given accounts of how a docetist version of Jesus might have been expected to arise, accounts of 'divine or spiritual visitants' such as are to be found in literature roughly contemporary with the early Church; we are told, by Michael Goulder, about a fascinating, if somewhat hypothetical, 'Samaritan Christianity,' but of the Christian doctrine that Jesus was not a 'spiritual visitant' but a man who was God we are given no serious analysis at all.

Aquinas begins his discussion of whether this doctrine can be true or not (Quaest. Disp. *De Unione Verbi Incarnati*) by saying "In order to answer this question it is necessary first to consider what we mean by 'nature' and secondly what we mean by 'person'." No such necessity seems to have weighed upon these authors. The word 'person' does not even figure in the index. At one point it is said that the incarnation means that Jesus was not a human person (they are not alone in thinking this: I have seen the same muddle in works of debased scholasticism). Part of the doctrine of the incarnation is precisely that Jesus was and is a human person; the other part is that this same identical person was and is divine. The adjectives 'divine' and 'human' express *what* Jesus is (his nature), the name 'Jesus' refers to *who* (which person) he is. In virtue of his human nature certain things can be asserted or denied about Jesus; in virtue of his divine nature certain other things can be asserted or denied of him, but all these assertions are about one person. The point is a logical (or, as these authors prefer to call it, a 'metaphysical') one. Thus it is true to say "God died on the cross" or "God suffered hunger and thirst" because in these sentences 'God' is a referring expression in Strawson's sense, indicating the subject, the person, about whom the assertion is being made. It is not, however, true to say "Jesus, *qua* God, died on the cross" for here 'God' belongs to the predicative part of the proposition and has the role of signifying a nature. There is no special mystery about this: it is no more than the logical difference between saying "A policeman murdered his wife" and saying "Mr. X, *qua* policeman, murdered his wife." The mystery of the incarnation lies in the fact that while, alas, there is nothing in the least odd about someone happening to be both a murderer and a policeman, when we are dealing not with what someone *happens* to be but with what constitutes him as what he fundamentally is, with what it takes for him to be at all, with (if you will pardon the expression) his essence or nature, then it does seem extremely odd for him to be two kinds of thing at once. It is in this way that Chalcedon points to the mystery of Jesus. Let me repeat: we may well find other ways of articulating this mystery, but if *we* are to speak in these old-fashioned terms of essence, nature, person, then to deny the paradoxical proposition of Chalcedon is to fail to grasp in faith the mystery which is Jesus.

For Professor John Hick it is all rather simple: he writes as though no one had hitherto observed the oddness of ascribing two natures to Jesus. "For to say, without explanation, that the historical Jesus of Nazareth was also God is as devoid of meaning as to say that this circle drawn with a pencil on paper is also a square." (p. 178) (It is not clear how any amount of 'explanation' could render meaningful something that begins by being devoid of meaning, but let it pass.) It is with statements like this that these theologians illustrate the perils of not having done much theology in Maurice Wiles's sense. A man accustomed to radical questioning of that kind would, of course, immediately ask: "Can it be that being divine is related to being human in the same way as being circular is related to being square?"

The mystery of Jesus is, like all mysteries, the mystery of what 'God' means. If we are to explore it we shall have to explore what we can, and more particularly what we cannot, confidently assert concerning God. We should be able to avoid, for example, the grotesquely infantile picture offered, apparently seriously, by Michael Goulder: "Once the world was on its way God did not interfere with it; but he surveys it with loving care, triumphing in man's loving response, agonizing with his suffering." (p. 61) You would think that two thousand years of Christianity would have got this idolatry of a celestial Camp Counselor out of our system once and for all. (We would also avoid such hair-raising sentences as "To reduce *all of God* to a human incarnation is virtually inconceivable." (p. 35) What could possibly be supposed to be meant by *part* of God?)

Circles and squares and triangles and such occupy their mutually exclusive territories in the common logical world of shapes. It is part of the *meaning* of a circle that it is not a square or any other shape; hence to say that something is both a circle and a square is to say both that it is and is not a circle, and this (*pace* the Latin Averroists and, possibly, Frances Young) is to say nothing at all. Similarly being human and being, say, a sheep occupy mutually exclusive territories in the common logical world of animals. It is part of the meaning of being human that one is not a sheep. And so on. But just what or where is the common logical world that is occupied in mutual exclusion by God and man? A circle and a square make two shapes; a man and a sheep make two animals: God and man make two what? It may be part of the meaning of man that he is not any other creature; it cannot be part of the *meaning* of man that he is not God. God is not one of the items in some universe which have to be excluded if it is just man that you are talking about. God could not be an item in any universe.

It follows that there is not, after all,



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the same contradiction in saying that Jesus is both man and God as there would be in saying that a circle is a square or that Jesus is both man and sheep. This does not mean that we actually *understand* what it means to say that Jesus is man and God; of course we do not clearly understand this any more than we clearly understand what it means to say that God created the world or that the consecrated elements are the body and blood of Christ or indeed that God exists or that I am a sinner. The doctrine of the incarnation, like the doctrines of creation or redemption, is not conveying information, it is pointing to a mystery in Jesus. We require of such a doctrine not that it be clearly intelligible but that at least it should say something e.g. that it should not contradict itself. This requirement, I think Professor Hick must on reflection agree, is satisfied by the doctrine of the incarnation.

Somewhere at the back of the minds of these authors lurks, it seems probable, the idea that the doctrine of the incarnation ought to tell us what Jesus was like, or what it was like to be Jesus. ("Orthodoxy has never been able to give this idea any content"—Hick; "The empirical content of what is understood to be involved in the incarnation"—Wiles.) Of course it does not; it does not tell us of his life but of the *significance* of his life. It authorizes us to say, for example, because of the life of Jesus, that our God was whipped and spat upon and that God has experienced total failure and death itself (and, incidentally, *not* to say, as Frances Young carelessly does, that, in Jesus, God "bore the pain and the guilt" of evil.) It may be that Hick himself is groping towards such an idea when he says that the doctrine is intended to "express an evaluation and evoke an attitude." Of course it is, but this is at least part of what Holy Mother Church has been teaching since before Chalcedon; there is no need for all this ambiguous and misleading stuff about myths.

A prominent symptom of misunderstanding the doctrine of the incarnation as telling us what, empirically, Jesus was or is like is confusion about Jesus's knowledge. I know that large claims have been made for Jesus's human knowledge, not only by Professor Mascall who is quoted here with proper disapproval by Wiles (p. 5) but by many other Christians, including St. Thomas Aquinas, but none of these claims has any logical connection with the incarnation. They seemed 'appropriate' to Mascall and to Aquinas; they do not seem appropriate to Maurice Wiles (or to me), but anyway to deny them has nothing to do with denying the doctrine of the incarnation any more than to assert them has to do with docetism.

People ask, then, did Jesus in Galilee assent to the Chalcedonian definition of himself? And nearly everyone nowadays says: No, he didn't. He lived in a time before the language of Chalcedon was formulated; he no more accepted this than he accepted Newton's third law or the theory of surplus value. But what about Jesus's self-understanding as *God*? There seems to be an idea that if we once admit (with Chalcedon) that Jesus was divine in Galilee—and hence living not merely in history but in eternity—he must, by the power of his divine nature, have foreseen the propositions of Chalcedon and assented to them. Once again the theological mind boggles. It would have seemed preposterous to, for example, Aquinas, to say that Divinity ever assented to *any* proposition at all. The idea that Jesus, *qua* Son of God, constructed some special divinely authorized set of propositions such as the Christian creed is as anthropomorphic as the idea that God has a white beard. Whatever we can mean by speaking of God's knowledge, we know that it cannot mean that God is well informed, that he assents to a large number of true statements. Jesus's knowledge of history, as Son of God, was no different from the existence of the world; it was not in the same ball-game with what he learned as man.

At the root of all this lies a deficient doctrine of God, and this must be partly due to the authors' omission of a thousand years of hard Christian thinking on the topic. Apart from a trivial reference to John Damascene (Cupitt, p. 133) the book shows no understanding of any theological work between the fifth and the fifteenth centuries—and not much after that either until the nineteenth—e.g. Frances Young: "*Modern* discussions have insisted on the impossibility of treating God as a thing like other things about which factual statements can be made." (p. 41, my italics.) Only such ignorance (which is quite standard in the theological departments of British universities) could account for the uncritical view of God manifest in these pages. I am sure it is true, as Frances Young clearly explains, that for many of the early Fathers there was a problem of the relation of God to the world and of Jesus to God which was seen in terms of platonist or neo-platonist puzzles about the One and the Many, but this was quite soon superseded by a more radically Christian understanding of God in terms of creation—a notion not available to Plato, Aristotle, or Plotinus.

With the idea of God as creator, as source of *esse* (roughly the being of the thing not just over against a world-without-it, but over against *nothing*, not even 'logical space') comes the idea of God as relevant to things precisely in virtue of transcendence. This God cannot be a Top Person summoned to fill the gaps in the natural order; this God must be at the heart of every being, acting in every action (whether determined or free), continually sustaining her creation over against nothing as a singer sustains her song over against silence—and that too is only a feeble metaphor, for even silence presupposes being.

To begin to grasp the Christian notion of God that was hammered out particularly in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries is to recognize the crudity and utter irrelevance of Feuerbach's polarization of man and God. It may well be the case that the bigger place you give to some non-Christian god the less room is left for man, and



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vice versa; any interference by the celestial Camp Counselor may well restrict man's freedom or compete with him for attention. For the Christian, however, Divinity is creative of man's freedom, and the more man is himself, the more he is free, the more is the action of God manifest.

It is in this perspective (not in the perspective of the god that is rival to man) that developed Christian theology saw the incarnation. Thus grace which, in Aquinas's view, was our personal openness in faith/knowledge and love to the divine life which is in any case always at the center of our being, finds its culmination in Jesus who is totally transparent to divinity in that the I which is the center of his being is not even created but simply known and loved into being by the Father. From this perspective there is not the same anxiety about the 'uniqueness' of the incarnation in Jesus. It is not that Christians expect to find another God/man in India or California (though Aquinas thought this perfectly possible in principle if not in the actual historical divine plan) but that the *exclusive* uniqueness of Jesus (Jesus-and-not-me instead of myself-in-Jesus) is simply the sin of the world. What we expect to find in India or California is not an alternative Christ but *alter Christus*. It is not that by grace we become extra incarnations of the Son of God but that by grace we belong to the one incarnation of the Son of God—we are 'in Christ' as Paul kept saying.

One of the concerns of these authors, particularly John Hick, is that the incarnation seems provincial in that it makes Christianity something utterly different from all other world religions. Now quite apart from the presence of grace and therefore of incarnation in the followers of other religions, it is really time we stopped and criticized this phrase. There is no significant world religion except Christianity. Every other religion, however many its adherents, has shown itself incapable of breaking free from a particular culture or even a particular people. Atheistic humanism is worldwide but not a religion. Indeed the paradoxical concept of a religion (something tied to history and tradition and particularity) which is nonetheless worldwide, transcending cultures and histories, is itself a peculiarly Christian and 'incarnational' notion. The Greek term for a world religion is Catholicism.

The motives of most of the authors of this book are to commend Christianity to men (including themselves) who cannot believe in a 'supernatural visitant' and cannot believe that God has remained silent except in the Judaeo-Christian tradition—I hope that I have shown that these ideas have nothing in common with orthodox traditional belief in the incarnation. It is not so with the author of what seems to me the most lucid and perceptive chapter in the book. Don Cupitt's reason for rejecting the incarnation has nothing to do with making Christianity more palatable to modern man; on the contrary, for him the incarnation is all too palatable in that it proposes the humanity of God. For him the message of Jesus was the opposition and challenge of God to man. "What matters in Jesus's message is his sense of the abrupt juxtaposition of two opposed orders of things . . . the doctrine of the incarnation unified things which Jesus has kept in ironic contrast to each other." (p. 140) Don Cupitt comes clean; his article is an outright rejection of Catholic Christianity and in particular of the Catholic idea that 'grace perfects nature.' It is good, vigorous, Protestant stuff which it would be a pleasure to answer had we but space—suffice for the moment to say that it seems to me to involve an antithesis of God and man (as distinct from an antithesis of the World and the Kingdom) appearing, despite much wisdom and insight, in Luther and made fully explicit in Feuerbach, an anti-thesis which is not to be found in the New Testatment. It will perhaps be even more pleasant to watch the debate on fundamentals which surely ought now to arise between Don Cupitt and his fellow-symposiasts.


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# CRITICS' CHOICES

## Dorothy Dohen

In a year which saw religious trendsetter Harvey Cox come full circle from his celebration of the secular, through his celebration of the exotic (and erotic) in Eastern religions and new Western semi-religions, to the rediscovery of his Christian heritage, I may not be out of fashion recommending books which I think are excellent in building up a neo-orthodoxy. A neo-orthodoxy, I hasten to add, purged of triumphalism in attitude and fundamentalism in approach.

My choice of Hans Küng's *On Being a Christian* (Doubleday, $12.95) may seem surprising, but there are two sections especially relevant to my theme of neo-orthodoxy. His discussion of the existence of God is masterful apologetics, especially for those ex-Christians or would-be Christians who find themselves still in the peculiar position of wanting to follow Christ while not believing in God. Küng's treatment of the Passion of Our Lord is in the best tradition of Christian devotionalism. Moreover, the book shows his superb assimilation of social-science literature. Kung uses sociology, but never as a substitute for theology, nor because he has lost confidence in the theological tradition.

His treatment of the virginal conception, his *a priori* rejection of miracles, and his snubbing of the Johannine scriptures, made me turn to the work of two scholars whose criticism of Küng I found at once empathetic and lucid: Avery Dulles and Raymond E. Brown.

Self-described as a moderate, Dulles writes in *The Resilient Church: The Necessity and Limits of Adaptation* (Doubleday, $7.95): "How can anyone who is forced to call into question the whole basis of his spiritual life become an effective witness for the tradition within which he stands?" Dulles goes on to indicate how rooted in that tradition he is. The book includes his explanation of the Hartford Appeal, in which he shows that it was not aimed at straw men but very real theologians, and that, moreover, it did not imply a withdrawal from Christian social action.

Brown's *The Birth of the Messiah* (Doubleday, $12.50) is splendid exegesis of the Infancy narratives. Brown shows that, far from being romantic and naive, they present a theology of Christ which is all of a piece with the rest of Matthew's and Luke's Gospels. Readers new to modern scriptural commentary, or who are wondering how Brown's work relates to the present state of the Church, would be well-advised to read first his *Biblical Reflections on Crises Facing the Church* (Paulist Press, $2.45).

Finally, for somewhat lighter reading I would recommend two books. One is William Sloane Coffin Jr.'s absorbing memoir *Once to Every Man* (Atheneum, $12.50). Eminent social activist of the sixties and signer of the Hartford Appeal, Coffin evidently saw the necessity for reaffirming Christian transcendence considerably before Cox. *The Joyful Christian:* 127 Readings from C. S. Lewis (Macmillan, $7.95) could introduce lovers of the Nardian chronicles to his theological and devotional works. Those of us who never forgot *The Screwtape Letters* will be reminded that Lewis left us a legacy of solid, genial Christianity. Could anyone else but this saintly, blustery, non-Roman British Christian make even the idea of Purgatory palatable?

## Kilian McDonnell

Discipline does not usually characterize my reading but preparation for a book on the Holy Spirit, for use in seminaries, has imposed restraints and, oddly enough, I find myself reading books on Christ.

Walter Kasper's *Jesus the Christ* (Paulist, $12.95), a masterful if at times heavy presentation, makes it evident that it is not odd at all that one turns to Christ to define the Spirit. One can best convey the uniqueness of Jesus and his universal significance through a Christology focused by the Spirit.

If Kasper uses the Spirit to define Christ, James Dunn, in *Jesus and the Spirit* (Westminster, $19.50), uses Christ to define the Spirit. He con-

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tends that there is more to New Testament revelation than experience but if one simply cuts and lifts out the experiential dimension, one has not only impoverished but has de-natured the original reality.

If one is looking for a quick insight into the re-examinations of the classical doctrine concerning Christ and a look at new emerging themes, Gerald O'Collins's *What Are They Saying About Jesus?* (Paulist, $1.75) is very helpful. Our knowledge of Jesus Christ is much too serious to be left to theologians and exegetes alone, who have monotonously neglected art and imagination as guides to religious truth. The antidote: reinstate mystics, clowns and artists. "The imaginable is the believable."

The Christological headlines this past year were made by two British books. *The Myth of the God Incarnate*, edited by John Hick (Westminster, $4.95) (Review-article page 150—Ed.) is a careful, scholarly symposium contending that heirs of the Enlightenment cannot accept the two-nature doctrine formulated at Chalcedon, and opts for a Christianity without incarnation. The blurb on the book speaks of a "reinterpretation" of the incarnation but evacuation is more accurate. Also voided is the unique character of Christ. This is not to make a small concession; there is nothing left but moral aphorisms. However unacceptable the central thesis, the book does serve to illuminate again the weaknesses, long known, of the Chalcedonian formulation. Chalcedon was not the last word but a new beginning and the quest continues.

Though on the side of the angels, *The Truth of God Incarnate*, edited by Michael Green (Eerdmans, $2.45) is an unworthy response. In this defense of the incarnation, not learning but propriety is wanting. Mixed in with solid insights and material of value are homiletic, hortatory and whimsical asides. Unnuanced broadsides are directed against the historical-critical method. How does one react to a book in which the introduction compares the authors of the *Myth of the God Incarnate* with Communists? One is embarrassed.

Are we drifting towards a Jesus-cult in a narrow sense? Some are asking, "If we have Jesus and the Bible, do we need the church?" and one arrives at a churchless Christianity. In this context will I be accused of monastic nepotism if I comment on a confrere's book? What will people say if . . .? Oh, who cares! It is a fine book. Jerome Theisen, in *The Ultimate Church and the Promise of Salvation* (St. John's University Press, $7.50), sees the continuing necessity of the church not as an ark containing all who will be saved, but as a sign of God's presence, who prays for and witnesses to others outside her visible structures, even if she is not their direct agent of salvation.

Cardinal Suenens's *Essays on Renewal* (Servant, $2.95) is not on Christology but it is clear that the charismatic renewal does not intend to displace the centrality of Christ with one of the Spirit. In the Cardinal's perspective, the renewal is as broad as the gospel and touches the whole of life. It is not a return to some illusory inwardness.

**Michael F. McCauley**

Surely the most talked-about book of the past year—even the *New York Times* carried an editorial about it—was the study commissioned by the Catholic Theological Society, *Human Sexuality* (Paulist Press, $8.95). And with good reason, Authors Anthony Kosnik, William Carroll, Agnes Cunningham, Ronald Madras and James Schulte have deliberately—defiantly, say some—eschewed the tunnel vision of earlier Catholic moralists. Most noteworthy in this study—certainly most controversial—are the extensive pastoral guidelines. For some, the person-centered approach is virtually condemnatory; clearly it is not *Roman* Catholic. Others, however, find that


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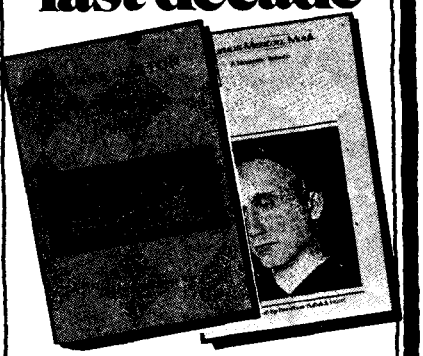

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*Human Sexuality* merely expresses the moral values they have been counseling for some time. Now that this glaring division over morality, this separation of official preachment and daily practice, is out in the open, we have the authors to thank—for their courage and, still more, for their sensitivity and honesty.

Deserving the same attention, for altogether different reasons, is Andrew Greeley's *The American Catholic* (Basic Books, $15.). Ostensibly intended to enlighten misinformed non-Catholics, it is a brilliant social portrait that is equally valuable to believers. Summarizing a massive series of surveys which represent fifteen years of research, the book is neither objective nor dispassionate, but then why should it be? American Catholics, contrary to the stereotypes, are more dovish, less racist and less anti-Semitic than others in the general population. Further, the data regarding educational, occupational and economic status indicate that Catholics have quite simply arrived. For setting the record straight in a conclusive manner, Father Greeley deserves accolades. More than this, he deserves the gratitude of American Catholics for the positive reinforcement he so ably provides.

Ellen and Mary Lukas's *Teilhard: The Man, The Priest, The Scientist* (Doubleday, $10.) is a fascinating, revealing look at the legendary Jesuit who "believed man is descended from the apes." Despite widespread zealous enthusiasm which enshrined Teilhard as a cult figure, little has been written about his personal life. Now, however, after ten years of research and interviews, the Lukases reveal a man of uncompromising loyalty to the church who, nevertheless, once called his ecclesiastical superiors "dolts and ignoramuses." What's more, Teilhard emerges as a socially engaging Frenchman who was irresistible to women, some of whom fell in love with him and pursued him on his worldwide travels. This is an enjoyable biography of an extraordinary thinker.

The fact that my desk is adjacent to that of the editor of this next volume in no way colors my opinion. Sr. Patricia Noone's *Mary for Today* (Thomas More Press, $8.95) is an exceptional book, one that could only be written in our consciousness-raised times by a woman who brings to her understanding of Mary an acute awareness of her own Christian womanhood. She concentrates on the real Mary, the woman who had a strong, realistic self-concept, the Mary who was both motherly and forceful. Disdaining sentimentality and superficiality, Sr. Noone is straightforward without being flippant, frank without being irreverent. She provides a thoroughly modern, affirmative treatment of Mary that is honest and pragmatic, neither enshrining Mary in theological obfuscations nor sequestering her in pious devotions.

Possibly the church which John Gregory Dunne portrays in *True Confessions* (E.P. Dutton, $9.95) is not the Catholic Church you grew up in or ever read about. Every character, every situation in this black humorous, cynical, gutsy novel completely contradicts the old-fashioned "Catholic novel." Dunne has masterfully constructed a raucous, foul-mouthed Irish-Catholic world of cops and priests, church fund-raisers and brothel-keepers, scheming monsignors and conniving Knights of St. Gregory. The protagonists, Homicide Lieutenant Tom Spellacy and the Rt. Rev. Monsignor Desmond Spellacy, though brothers, profess conflicting loyalties—sanctimonious Des, soiled Tommy—yet are somehow remarkably similar, even interchangeable. Each in his own way is involved in a grisly murder case; each in his own way becomes a victim. *True Confessions* delves into the complex lives of these two brothers, exposing the guilt and hostility that separate, yet finally unite them. Ultimately, Dunne writes about the ambiguities of life that line the road to salvation.

## Arthur A. Cohen

The most remarkable departure among religious books is not explicitly a religious book, but a book of reflections, responses to questions which need not be asked and virtually defy answer. Edmond Jabès, an Egyptian Jew, obliged to leave Cairo after 1956, now settled in Paris, undertakes in *The Book of Yukel* and *Return to the Book* (constituting the second and third volumes of his trilogy, *Le Livre des Questions*, but published as a single volume, Wesleyan University Press, $5.95) to develop a mystical semantics, a primary language which undergirds speech, which often renders speech beside the point. The principal recurrent themes of this work—the holocaust, the perduration of Israel, the despair of the word—impart an obsessional quality to Jabès's thought which is betimes atmospherically dense, betimes needlessly rhetorical, but is always to my mind addressing the living theological center, about which all post-holocaustal theology must turn: if God is responsible, in what measure the responsibility? if God is not responsible, does one need such a God?

It is a pleasure to welcome Thomas J. J. Altizer back to a mode of theo-

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logical address, wholly uncompromised by the necessities of defending oneself far out on the limb (that is, having to cope with the discomforts of unpopularity by polemical exaggeration). His new book, *The Self-Embodiment of God* (Harper & Row, $6.95) is a splendidly difficult, but not in the least obtuse, meditation on divine self-embodiment in the metaphor and language of Scripture. God is embodied in speech (in a certain sense physicalized)—the Word is both a portion of the self and the other of God, the dialectical affirmation and denial which is the electrostatic field of creativity, judgment, salvation, and the end of history. Altizer, like myself an admirer of Jabès (although I think him wrong to interpret Jabès as an apocalyptist, since apocalypse comes hard to Jewish lips, for we are forbidden to force the end, only to describe it), is at his best in *The Self-Embodiment of God*.

Finally, however, the book that has brought together my own theological thinking, pressing me at last out of the fitted mold of a generation, and turning me loose to address questions I knew to have been unanswered and virtually unasked. Gershom Scholem's *On Jews and Judaism in Crisis: Selected Essays* (Schocken Books, $16.50) appears to lack unity, although its unity is real and implicit. It moves from an extended giographical interview with Scholem, conducted with great wit and penetration, through Scholem's bitter examination of the so-called German-Jewish symbiosis, one created by the naiveteé and trust of Jews, and thoroughly betrayed by its ostensible collaborators; penetrating examination of S. Y. Agnon, the Hebrew novelist of the diaspora; Martin Buber in praise and criticism; Walter Benjamin in love, admiration, and sorrow; and just before the bitter exchange with Hannah Arendt regarding her *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, the single most important essay of the postwar period on the crisis of Jewish theology. "Reflections on Jewish Theology" is the first to employ the findings and insights of a lifetime spent gathering and winnowing the harvest of two millennia of Jewish mysticism and turning its criteria to the devastation that passes as Jewish theology. How barren it is, how desperate it appears, how hopeful, in fact, it may be regarded. Building upon the findings of Franz Rosenweig (and his roots in German mysticism, as well as Jehuda Halevi and Ludwig Steinheim) and employing Scholem as the near-canonic cicerone who has identified where the questions are to be found and liberated, I believe there is a remarkable period ahead for world Jewish thinking.

## Richard J. Neuhaus

The oddness of recommending David L. Norton's *Personal Destinies: A Philosophy of Ethical Individualism* (Princeton University Press. $22.50) in a roundup of outstanding religious books will not be lost on the author. His powerful defense of personal worth and destiny is marred by an anti-religious animus that is as regrettable as it is, in my view, unnecessary to his argument. With some sympathetic translation, however, the Christian reader should be able to recognize this book as a significant re-engagement of philosophy in the discussion of the "ultimate questions" that has suffered from a too exclusive relegation to the realm of theology. *Truthfulness and Tragedy* (Univ. of Notre Dame. $12.95) is a further offering of ethical wisdom and insight from Stanley Hauerwas. Hauerwas, a Methodist on the Notre Dame faculty, continues to be one of the most consistently rewarding guides to a wide range of ethical problems troubling the Christian community today. Once again, Magda Denes's *In Necessity and Sorrow* (Basic. $10.) is not a specifically religious book but she illuminates the everyday life-and-death realities of abortion with stunning compassion and moral sensitivity. Her conclusions may not be persuasive but she relentlessly asks the right questions and thus contributes to the understanding of an issue that has a continued claim upon our thinking about a just society. Even if he were not my friend, I would have to mention Peter Berger's *Facing Up to Modernity* (Basic. $11.50), a collection of essays in which the religious concern is usually explicit and is never far from the surface. Some of the essays elaborate themes about "mediating structures and public policy" that were set out in our joint effort, *To Empower People* (available from Mediating Structures, 170 E. 64th St., N.Y.C. 10021. $2.50) Among more exactly theological works, Wolfhart Pannenberg has given us a little paperback with the formidable title, *Human Nature, Election and History* (Westminster. $4.95). As one expects from Pannenberg, who continues what is, I believe, the most impressive individual theological enterprise in our time, the book is a carefully wrought argument that leads the reader through a comprehensive vision of biblical and classical theology. Of special interest is the focus on the one covenant shared by Jews and Christians and Pennenberg's exploration of the idea of election as it relates to communities and nations in our kind of world. Finally, for sheer joy and edification, there is W. Jackson Bate's biography, *Samuel Johnson* (Harcourt Brace. $19.95). Bate is wonderfully alert to the part of religion in Dr. Johnson's worldview and convincingly portrays what is rarely celebrated in our culture devoted to


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## Sr. Margaret Ellen Traxler

*Women and the Word: Sermons.* Helen Gray Crotwell, ed. Fortress Press. $4.25.

Women of diverse faiths, races and academic disciplines have each contributed a sermon to this readable book. The homilies are filled with Scripture, anecdotes, application and meaning. Editor Helen Crotwell has such writers as Nancy Hardesty, Valerie Russell, Nadine Foley, Cynthia Wedel, and Letty Russell each contribute a sermon to serve the worshipping communities. These nineteen women give the impression that they are in touch with the Living God. In our day when complaints are heard about poor sermons, perhaps this book will help churches "not to forget the ladies."

*Women Priests.* Arlene and Leonard Swidler, eds. Paulist Press. $9.95.

Forty-five authors including such men as Carroll Stuhlmueller, John McKenzie, and Thomas Thompson; and women theologians as Sandra Schneiders, Pheme Perkins, and Sonya Quitslund give compelling and complete commentaries on "The Vatican Declaration on the Question of the Admission of Women to the Ministerial Priesthood." This book goes well beyond its design to serve as commentary for the document. It is a valuable compendium for on-going discussion of a crucial issue facing the church. Forty-five essays by as many writers provide a library of resources. In the light of such excellent scholarship, the Vatican might even grant women tonsure!

*Mary for Today.* Patricia Noone. Thomas More Press. $8.95.

Just as Jesus is translated for each age, so also must be Mary translated for each new day. One reason why Marian devotion falters may be that a feminine principle has not been used to adapt Mary's gifts and meaning for this age. Patricia Noone does this simply and clearly using scriptural and classical background which helps to make *Mary for Today* one more gift for the United Nations-designated Decade of Women, 1976-1986. The author claims she may not even be able to pray the whole rosary without being prompted. Her devotion to Mary as shown in *Mary for Today* gives us a portrait of the author not only as a professor of English which she is but also a faithful daughter of Mary and a woman who knows and appreciates her womanhood.

*The Coming of the Third Church.* Walbert Buhlmann. Orbis. $12.95.

Karl Rahner called this the best book of the year, Sister Margaret Brennan, IHM, the book of the decade. It is both.

The first church was the church of the East where the first eight ecumenical councils were held. The second church flourished in Europe of which the U.S. is part. The Third World gives us the third church which is not coming but is already here. The author, a Swiss missiologist gives a clear picture of the shape, color and texture of this new creative presence, the third church in Africa, Asia and Latin America.

Not only does Buhlmann present the problems of adaptation such as tribal customs, mores and folkways of "adjusting" Christianity to this new presence. He also gives some possible ways in which the new church can remain itself with such procedures as the "bride price" and others, while at the same time embracing Christianity and over the generations, becoming the whole family, true to each man and woman.

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### African Institute

African Institute. For Christians preparing to serve in Africa and those on furlough, 12 June- 7 July 1978. Information: Dr. Peter Walshe, African Studies, University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame, Indiana 46556.

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### CRITICS

FATHER HERBERT MCCABE, O.P., is the editor of *New Blackfriars,* Oxford, in which his review-article first appeared.

DOROTHY DOHEN, professor of sociology, currently chairs the interdisciplinary division at Fordham University's Lincoln Center campus.

FATHER KILIAN MCDONNELL, O.S.B., is Executive Director of the Institute for Ecumenical and Cultural Research at Collegeville, Minnesota.

MICHAEL F. MCCAULEY is executive editor of the Thomas More Association newsletters and the author of *A Contemporary Meditation on Doubting.*

ARTHUR A. COHEN is completing a new novel, *Acts of Theft.* His anthology drawn from Martin Buber's periodical, *Der Jude* (1916-1928), will be published at the end of the year.

RICHARD JOHN NEUHAUS is Senior Editor of *Worldview* and the author of *Christian Faith and Public Policy* (Augsburg). He is associate pastor of Trinity Lutheran Church in Manhattan.

SISTER MARGARET ELLEN TRAXLER is Director of the Institute of Women Today, an inter-faith faculty of 100 professional women based in Chicago.



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half the world's Catholics are in the southern hemisphere. By the year 2000, half the world's Catholics (1.2 billion) will be in Latin America. The face of the next century church may be shaped by how the West welcomes this new coming.

*Just Because.* Margaret Shannon. Omega Books. $4.50.

This is a history of the Church Women United, a nation-wide organization of Protestant, Catholic, Orthodox and Jewish women. Dr. Shannon, a former director of that organization, covers its history from 1941-1975. Beyond the excellence of the narrative lies an important story of women's witness to what women's bonding has achieved. Church Women United is a unique matrix. There is no other example like it. *Just Because* gives a story which must also be a challenge to other groups, precisely because of the global caring and sharing of Church Women United.

## CORRESPONDENCE

*(Continued from page 131)*

lost forever the fairy tale land of Eden. By exercising his freedom to choose, man becomes responsible for good and evil and can never be free of this responsibility to live the childlike existence of Eden. But, we cannot discharge this responsibility without the knowledge of good and evil, and the traditionalists' claim to this knowledge is being seriously challenged by those who clearly see the evil in the unloving consequences of what the traditionalists call good.

Father Greeley should have asked whether Christian theology and liturgy will be able to make Christians aware of the awesome mystery and paradox of this gift and give us the sense of direction, purpose, and humility to discern and follow goodness without creating a crutch, a fantasy, escapism, that allows us to avoid responsibility for good and evil. Can Christianity find a broader criterion for morality that will bring goodness closer to the loving that frees others from self-concern to love in their turn, as Jesus did? Can Christian love become the impetus for a sharing, cooperating world? Or will Christianity remain a haven for those who want the comfort of a commitment to the loving Jesus without the discomfort of a commitment to help and share with their fellowman, a platitude to justify self-interest, with love distorted into the self-righteous duty to save the world for our own personal salvation, becoming a force for evil rather than good? Cooperative efforts on hunger and poverty are encouraging, but certainly Christianity is failing to meet this challenge in the abortion issue. The endless, specious arguments between pro- and anti-abortionists serve merely to solidify these positions, while obscuring the one approach on which the majority could agree—cooperative efforts to reduce the need for abortions.

MARILYN KRAMER

### Death on Demand

Raleigh, N.C.

*To the Editors:* The article by Sister Lois Spear in the November 25 issue underscores one of the frequently neglected arguments against the death penalty, namely, that it most probably induces some persons to murder. Shortly after the publication of her article, Daniel Webster, one of the inmates of North Carolina's death row, took his own life with a razor blade, dramatically illustrating his own suicidal drive [News & Views, Dec. 9]. In the face of incidents like this, it is hard to see how proponents of the death penalty can continue to believe that it is effective as a deterrent. We do not know how many murders are motivated by a desire to destroy themselves, but there have been studies which document increases in homicide rates before and after highly publicized executions.

A state senator said to me several months ago with regard to capital punishment, "We do not know if it is a deterrent or not, but we have to do something. The people are demanding it." I expect that this kind of desperation and frustration lies at the base of much popular and legislative support of executions. Thus, in our outrage at violence, we collaborate with it and encourage it.

COLLINS KILBURN
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